FEBRUARY 1960

Commentary

Youth in the Organized Society PAUL GOODMAN

In Puerto Rico ALFRED KAZIN

F. W. DUPEE

Norman Mailer

Birth Control and Public Policy
KINGSLEY DAVIS - JUDITH BLAKE

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On the death of a friend LIONEL TRILLING

Last of the saints ARTHUR KOESTLER

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story ISAAC BASHEVIS SINGER **One Who Came Back**

report LAWRENCE BLOOMGARDEN **Our New Elite Colleges**

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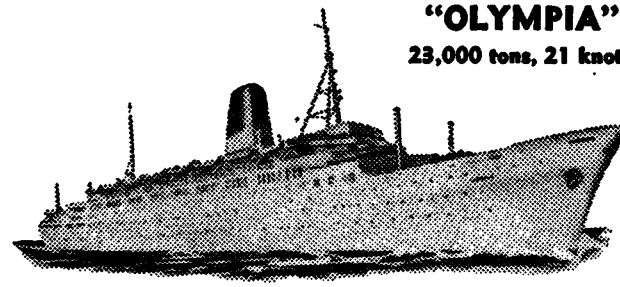

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The Issue

"On the Death of a Friend" was spoken by Lionel Trilling at the funeral services held for Elliot Cohen on May 31, 1959, and we are publishing it here in its original form. Everyone knows that Elliot Cohen created COMMENTARY and edited it for fourteen years, but I doubt that anyone except the people who in one capacity or another were close to the actual workings of the magazine ever appreciated the extent to which COMMENTARY *was* Elliot Cohen. All good editors have a style, and it was the essence of Elliot Cohen's style that the magazine he produced should appear to be self-generated: no editor ever hid from his readers more insistently than he, and no "journal of opinion" ever came before the world with so chaste a presentation, chaste even in format and typography—the stately Fairfield columns, the severe rectangular proportions. When you looked at the cover of an issue of COMMENTARY, you saw a quiet pattern of type that suggested homage to the classic virtues—order, harmony, balance, the whole taking precedence over the individual parts. No single article was ever featured, and the subject of each piece was always stressed above the name of its author.

But the fact is that the impersonality of COMMENTARY—as any of its contributors can testify—derived from a very powerful exertion of personality. At least half of the articles Elliot Cohen published were written only because he forced them into being. He was gifted with an uncanny sensitivity to what may be called the representative issues—that is, the problems preying on the minds of a great many people at any given moment, sometimes a touch below the level of awareness—and therefore he invariably knew where the relevant areas of discussion lay and by which writers they might be illuminated. Some editors (like the late Robert Warshow, who served on the staff of COMMENTARY for nearly nine years) are distinguished for an extraordinary understanding of the peculiar talents of others, and they operate by helping a writer to realize his own intentions more perfectly. Elliot Cohen, on the other hand, was the kind of editor who worked largely by feeding ideas to writers and by encouraging them to push harder and aim higher than they might otherwise have done. He was more concerned with broadening their intentions than with bringing the ideas they already had into full flower, and often he opened new worlds for them to explore, worlds of whose existence they had scarcely been conscious be-

[*continued on page 182*]

Forthcoming

Daniel Bell: The End of Collective Bargaining? An analysis of the steel strike by a leading sociologist who believes that the recently terminated negotiations represent a wholly new development in the history of collective bargaining in America.

Sidney Hook: Modern Knowledge and the Idea of God What effect has the course of modern thought had on the traditional arguments for the existence of God? Professor Hook examines some of the more sophisticated positions being taken by theologians today.

Robert Gorham Davis: The Oberammergau Passion Play Every ten years a famous passion play (whose text has become notorious for its anti-Semitic sentiments) is performed at Oberammergau in the south of Germany. A literary critic who has studied the history of the play describes its contents and asks what effect the next performance—which is scheduled for this coming spring—may have in a Germany once again plagued by anti-Semitic vandalism.

Also contributions by **Leslie A. Fiedler** **John Roche** **H. D. Schmidt** **David T. Bazelon** **Richard Wollheim** **Raymond Rosenthal** **Gordon A. Craig**

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On the death of a friend

LIONEL TRILLING

If we are to speak of Elliot Cohen with truth, the first thing we must say about him is that he was a man of genius.

Whoever, at any time, experienced the power of his mind, and the quality of his mind, knows that this is so. He had the direct intuition of genius. He had the unremitting passion of genius. He had the peculiar charm of genius. And he bore the heavy pain of genius.

His genius found its chief and characteristically brilliant expression in a strange and wonderful pedagogy. He taught his friends: and I have long thought of him as the greatest teacher I have ever known. If I may speak of my own particular case, I would wish to acknowledge him as the *only* great teacher I have ever had.

In speaking of Elliot Cohen as a teacher, and a great teacher, I am not using a mere fashion of speech. Some undue diffidence, which his friends long ago learned not to question, kept Elliot from undertaking to be a teacher in an actual classroom, but he often gave expression to his belief that the teacher's function was the greatest that a man could discharge and that the teacher's name was the proudest that a man could bear, and he loved to think of himself as giving instruction: he delighted in any occasion that allowed him to assume the teacher's role.

How often he assumed that role, and to what effect, there are many of us here who will testify. If any of us, by the respect we have learned to bear to language, have acquired some control over it, much of whatever power of communication we may have was given to us by Elliot Cohen. He believed that no idea was so difficult and complex but that it could be expressed in a way that would make it understood by anyone to whom it might conceivably be of interest. He was able to instill this belief in many, and he painstakingly demonstrated how it could be implemented. No man in our country in our time had a greater respect for the virtues of English prose, and better served them and all that they may stand for in the life of the mind —that life to which Elliot Cohen gave an unending devotion.

LIONEL TRILLING's first published work appeared in the 1920's in *The Menorah Journal*, of which Elliot Cohen (then also in his twenties) was the managing editor. The author of several influential volumes of literary criticism (among them *The Liberal Imagination* and *The Opposing Self*), Mr. Trilling is professor of English at Columbia and an editor of the Mid-Century Book Society.

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His belief in the communicability of virtually all ideas in part accounts for his acknowledged greatness as an editor. It was the expression of his passionate democracy. It seems to me that the time has gone by when we easily speak of a man's democracy as a greatly honorable trait of mind and temperament, but I think that we do not speak truthfully of Elliot if we do not apply this word, in all its old effulgence, to him.

And then there are many of us who, if we live our intellectual lives under the aspect of a complex and vivid idea of culture and society, owe that idea not to the social sciences but to Elliot Cohen. Elliot's own mind was dominated by his sense of the subtle interrelations that exist between the seemingly disparate parts of a culture, and between the commonplaces of daily life and the most highly developed works of the human mind. Long before the sociologists made the study of mass culture and popular culture part of their stock in trade, Elliot taught us to think about them with seriousness. Indeed, he taught the younger men around him that nothing in human life need be alien to their thought, and nothing in American life, whether it be baseball, or vaudeville, or college tradition, or elementary education, or fashions in speech, or food, or dress, or manners.

He himself seemed to find nothing in human life alien to him. His power of affectionate acceptance was extraordinary—it was startling, indeed, in our time when it more and more becomes our habit to define ourselves by our exclusions, our calculated indifferences, our disapprovals.

It is important to remember of Elliot how much of life he accepted, and not only accepted but loved. That impulse of revulsion from the human, which has often been noted as a characteristic of our culture, was wholly foreign to his nature. Just as it was necessary to say of him that his mind was suffused by a feeling for democracy, so it is necessary to revive for him the once bright phrase, "love of humanity": to the astonishment of many of his friends, he loved humanity, he loved the human.

But in his general love of the human, he gave a special love to that which was most highly developed in our life, to that which was the expression of the human wish for the free, the gratuitous—for what proposed the possibility of liberation from the bonds of necessity. He loved grace of all kinds, especially the grace of wit, and he himself was the wittiest man we shall ever know. He had a peculiar esteem for elegance of style in life as in thought. He valued whatever ministered to, or seemed the expression of, an appropriate human pride.

Perhaps he was licensed to give so much feeling to what in life is gratuitous—to what is finely free—because he had so much natural awareness of what in life binds us, whether for good or for bad.

If we speak of Elliot Cohen as a man of genius, we have no right to remain silent about the suffering that genius may endure—to do that would be to ignore the courage of the endurance. No one who knew Elliot as a friend through his mature life could be unaware that the pain of existence was darker for him than it is for most of us. I know of no response we can make to his pain other than that of our silent humility before it, and before the mystery of this great pain being bound up with so much delight in human life and with so much power—no other response than this, and the increase of our love for Elliot.

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PAUL GOODMAN

Youth in the Organized Society

Growing up in America

■ It's hard to grow up when there isn't enough man's work. There is "nearly full employment" (with highly significant exceptions), but there get to be fewer jobs that are necessary or unquestionably useful; that require energy and draw on some of one's best capacities; and that can be done keeping one's honor and dignity. In explaining the widespread troubles of adolescents and young men, this simple objective factor is not much mentioned. Let us here insist on it.

By man's work I mean a very simple idea, so simple that it is clearer to ingenuous boys than to most adults. To produce necessary food and shelter is man's work. During most of economic history most men have done this drudging work, secure that it was justified and worthy of a man to do it, though often feeling that the social conditions under which they did it were *not* worthy of a man, thinking, "It's better to die than to live so hard"—but they worked on. When the environment has been forbidding, as in wresting a living in the Swiss Alps or the Aran Islands, we regard such work with poetic awe. In emergencies it is heroic, as when the bakers of Paris maintained the supply of bread during the French Revolution, or the milkman did not miss a day's delivery when the bombs recently tore up London.

Novelist, poet, dramatist, and social critic, PAUL GOODMAN is the author of an impressive number of books, the most recent being the much discussed work of fiction *The Empire City*.

At present there is little such subsistence work. Let us guess that one-twentieth of our economy is devoted to it. Production of food is actively discouraged. Farmers are not wanted and the young men go elsewhere. (The farm population is now less than 20 per cent.) Building, on the contrary, is immensely needed. One would think that ambitious boys would flock to this work. Here we find that building, too, is discouraged. In the great city of New York now for twenty years hundreds of thousands are ill-housed, yet we do not see that science, industry, and labor are enthusiastically enlisted for the quick solution of this definite problem. The promoters are interested in long-term investments, the real estate men in speculation, the city-planners in votes and graft. The building craftsmen cannily see to it that their own numbers remain few, their methods antiquated, and their rewards high. Nobody is much interested in providing shelter, and nobody is at all interested in providing new manly jobs.

Once we turn away from the absolutely necessary subsistence jobs, however, we find that an enormous proportion of our production is not even unquestionably useful. Everybody knows and also feels this, and there has recently been a flood of books about our surfeit of honey, our insolent chariots, and the follies of ex-urban ranch houses; our hucksters and our synthetic demand. Many acute things are said about this useless production and advertising, but not much about the workmen producing it and

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their frame of mind; and nothing at all, so far as I have noticed, about the plight of a young fellow looking for a manly occupation. The eloquent critics of the American way of life have themselves been so seduced by it that they think only in terms of selling commodities and point out that the goods are valueless; but they fail to see that people are being wasted and their skills insulted. (To give an analogy, in the many gleeful onslaughts on the Popular Culture that have appeared in recent years, there has been little thought of the plight of the honest artist cut off from his audience and sometimes, as in public arts like theater and architecture, from his medium.)

What is strange about it? American society has tried so hard and so ably to defend the practice and theory of production for profit and not primarily for use, that now it has succeeded in making its jobs and products profitable and useless.

Consider a likely useful job. A youth who is alert and willing but not "verbally intelligent"—perhaps he has quit high school at the eleventh grade (the median), as soon as he legally could—chooses for auto mechanic. That's a good job, familiar to him, he often watched them as a kid. It's careful and dirty at the same time. In a small garage it's sociable; one can talk to the customers (girls). You please people in trouble by fixing their cars, and a man is proud to see rolling out on its own the car that limped in behind the tow truck. The pay is as good as the next fellow's, who is respected.

So our young man takes this first-rate job. But what when he then learns that the cars have a built-in obsolescence, that the manufacturers do not want them to be repaired or repairable? They have lobbied a law that requires them to provide spare parts for only five years (it used to be ten). Repairing the new cars is a matter of cosmetics not mechanics; and the repairs are pointlessly expensive—a tail fin might cost $150. The insurance rates therefore double and treble on old and new cars both. Gone are the days of keeping jalopies in good shape, the artist-work of a proud mechanic. But everybody is paying for foolishness, for in fact the new models are only trivially superior; the whole thing is a sell.

It is hard for the young man now to maintain his feelings of justification, sociability, serviceability. It is not surprising if he quickly becomes cynical and time-serving, interested in a fast buck. And so, on the notorious *Reader's Digest* test—the car with a disconnected coil wire—the investigators found 63 per cent of mechanics charged for repairs they didn't make, and lucky if they didn't also take out the new fuel pump and replace it with a used one. (65 per cent of radio repair shops, but only 49 per cent of watch repairmen "lied, overcharged, or gave false diagnoses.")

There is an hypothesis that an important predisposition to juvenile delinquency is the combination of low verbal intelligence with high manual intelligence, delinquency giving a way of self-expression where other avenues are blocked by lack of schooling. A lad so endowed might well apply himself to the useful trade of mechanic.

Most manual jobs do not lend themselves so readily to knowing the facts and fraudulently taking advantage. In factory jobs the workman is likely to be ignorant of what goes on, since he performs a small operation on a big machine that he does not understand. Even so there is evidence that he has the same disbelief in the enterprise as a whole, with a resulting attitude of profound indifference.

Semi-skilled factory operatives are the largest category of workmen. (I am leafing through the U.S. Department of Labor's *Occupational Outlook Handbook, 1957.*) Big companies have tried the devices of applied anthropology to enhance the loyalty of the men to the firm, but apparently the effort is hopeless, for it is found that a thumping majority of the men don't care about the job or the firm; they couldn't care less and you can't make them care more. But this is *not* because of wages, hours, or working conditions, or manage-

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ment. On the contrary, the tests of Robert Dubin that show the men's indifferences to the company, show also their (unaware) admiration for the way the company has designed and manages the plant; it is their very model of style, efficiency, and correct behavior. Maybe if they understood more, they would admire less. The union and the grievance committee take care of wages, hours, and conditions; these are the things the workmen themselves fought for and won. (Something was missing in that victory, and we have inherited the failure as well as the success.) The conclusion must be that workmen are indifferent to the job because of its intrinsic nature: the work does not enlist a man's worthwhile capacities, it is not "interesting"; it is not his, he is not "in" on it; the product is not unquestionably useful; and he doesn't care about the enterprise. And research directly on this subject, by Frederick Herzberg, shows that it is defects in the intrinsic aspects of the job that make workmen "unhappy." (A survey of the literature, in Herzberg's *Job Attitudes,* shows that interest is second in importance only to security, whereas wages, conditions, hours, ease, and benefits are far less important. But foremen, significantly enough, think that the most important thing to the workman is his wages.)

"Security" is always first; but in normal conditions a large part of security comes from knowing your contribution is useful, and the rest from knowing it's uniquely yours: they need you.

What a remarkable thing such studies tell us! That men want to do good work and work that is somehow theirs. But they are thwarted. Is not this the "waste of our human resources" that is talked about?

The case is that by the "sole prerogative" clause in union contracts the employer has the sole right to determine what is to be produced, how it is to be produced, what plants are to be built and where, what kinds of machinery are to be installed, when workers are to be hired and when laid off, and how production operations are to be rationalized (Frank Marquart). Under these circumstances, it is not surprising if the factory operatives' actual code has absolutely nothing to do with useful service or increasing production, but is devoted to "interpersonal relations": (1) don't turn out too much work; (2) don't turn out too little work; (3) don't squeal on a fellow worker; (4) don't act like a big-shot (Elton Mayo; these are not Mayo's principles). This is how to belong.

II

Let us go on to the occupational outlook of those who are verbally bright. Among this group, just because they cannot help asking more general questions, the problem of finding man's work is harder and their disillusion more poignant. The more intelligent worker's "indifference" is likely to appear more nakedly as profound resignation, and his cynicism may sharpen to outright racketeering.

"Teaching," says the *Handbook,* "is the largest of the professions." So suppose our now verbally bright young man chooses for teacher, in the high school system or, by exception, in the elementary schools if he understands that these are the vitally important grades and require the most ability to teach well (and of course have less prestige). Teaching is necessary and useful work; it is real and creative, for it directly confronts an important subject matter, the children themselves; it is obviously self-justifying; and it is ennobled by the arts and sciences. Those who practice teaching do not for the most part succumb to cynicism or indifference—the children are too immediate and real for the teachers to become callous—but they certainly come to suffer first despair and then deep resignation. Resignation occurs psychologically as follows: frustrated in essential action, they nevertheless cannot quit in anger, because the task is necessary; so the anger turns inward and is felt as resignation.

For the job is carried on in impossible conditions of overcrowding and saving public money. *Not* that there is not enough social wealth, but first things are not put first.

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Also, the school system has spurious aims. It soon becomes clear that the underlying aims are to relieve the home and keep the kids quiet; or, suddenly, the aim is to produce physicists. Timid supervisors, bigoted clerics, and ignorant school boards forbid real teaching. The emotional release and sexual expression of the children are taboo. A commercially debauched popular culture makes learning disesteemed. The academic curriculum is mangled by the demands of reactionaries, liberals, and demented warriors. Progressive methods are emasculated. Attention to each case is out of the question, and all the children, the bright, the average, and the dull are systematically retarded one way or another, while the teacher's hands are tied. Naturally the pay is low—for the work is hard, useful, and of public concern, all three of which categories tend to get lower pay. It is alleged that the low pay is why there is a shortage of teachers and why the best do not choose the profession. My guess is that the best avoid it because of the certainty of mis-educating. Nor are the best *wanted* by the system, for they are not safe. Bertrand Russell was rejected by New York's City College and would not have been accepted in a New York grade school.

Next, what happens to the verbally bright who have no zeal for a serviceable profession and who have no particular scientific or artistic bent? For the most part they make up the tribes of salesmanship, entertainment, business management, Madison Avenue. Here of course there is no question of utility or honor to begin with, so an ingenuous boy will not look here for a manly career. Nevertheless, though we can pass by the sufferings of these well-paid callings, much publicized by their own writers, they are important to our theme because of the model they present to the growing boy.

Consider the men and women in TV advertisements, demonstrating the product and singing the jingle. They are clowns and mannequins, in grimace, speech, and action. And again, what I want to call attention to in this advertising is not the economic problem of synthetic demand, and not the cultural problem of Popular Culture, but the human problem that these are human beings working as clowns; that the writers and designers of it are human beings thinking like idiots; and the broadcasters and underwriters know and abet what goes on: *"Fruitily, bubbily, Hoffman's is dubbily good as good can be!"* Alternately, they are liars, confidence men, smooth talkers, obsequious, insolent, etc., etc.

The popular-cultural content of the advertisements is somewhat neutralized by *Mad* magazine, the bible of the twelve-year-olds who can read. But far more influential and hard to counteract is the *fact* that the workmen and the patrons of this enterprise are human beings. (Highly approved too.) They are not good models toward looking for manly jobs that are useful and necessary, requiring human energy and capacity, and that can be done with honor and dignity. They are a good sign that not many such jobs will be available.

The rigged quiz shows, which created a scandal last year, were a remarkably pure distillate of our American cookery. We start with the brute facts that (a) in our abundant expanding economy it is necessary to give money away to increase spending, production, and profits; and (b) that this money must not be used for useful public goods in taxes, but must be ploughed back as "business expenses," even when there is a shameful shortage of schools, housing, etc. Yet when the TV people at first tried simply to give the money away for nothing, there was a great Calvinistic outcry that this was demoralizing—just as we may gamble on the horses only to improve the breed. So they hit on the notion of a contest with prizes. But then, of course, they could not resist making the show itself profit-making and competitive in the (also rigged) ratings with other shows, so the experts in the entertainment-commodity manufactured phony contests. And to cap the climax of fraudulence, the hero of the phony contests proceeded to persuade himself, so he says, that his behavior was educational!

The behavior of the networks was corre-

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spondingly typical. These business organizations claim the loyalty of their employees, but at the first breath of trouble they were ruthless and disloyal to their employees. (Even McCarthy was loyal to his gang.) They want to maximize profits and yet be absolutely safe from any risk. Consider their claim that they knew nothing about the fraud. (In my opinion this was a plain lie.) If they watched the shows that they were broadcasting, they could not possibly, as professionals, not have known the facts, for there were obvious type-casting, acting, plot, etc. If they are not professionals, they are incompetent. But if they don't watch what they broadcast, then they are utterly irresponsible, and on what grounds do they have the franchises to the channels? We may offer them the choice: that they are liars or incompetent or irresponsible.

The new direction of the investigation seems to me more important, the inquiry into the bribed disc-jockeying; for this deals directly with our crucial economic problem of synthesized demand, made taste, debauching the public and preventing the emergence and formation of natural taste. In such circumstances there cannot possibly be an American culture, we are doomed to nausea and barbarism. And *then* these baboons have the effrontery to declare that they give the people what the people demand, and are not responsible for the level of the movies, the music, the plays, the books!

Finally, in leafing through the *Occupational Outlook Handbook,* we notice that Armed Forces employ a large number. Here our young man can become involved in a world-wide demented enterprise with personnel and activities corresponding.

III

Thus, on the simple criteria of unquestioned utility, employing human capacities, and honor, there are not enough worthy jobs in our economy for average boys and adolescents to grow up toward. There are of course thousands of jobs that are worthy and self-justifying, and thousands that can be made so by stubborn integrity. Extraordinary intelligence or special talent, also, can often carve out a place for itself —conversely, their usual corruption and waste are all the more sickening. But by and large our economic society is *not* geared for the cultivation of its young or the attainment of important goals that they can work toward.

This is evident from the usual kind of vocational guidance, which consists in measuring the boy and finding some place in the economy where he can be fitted; chopping him down to make him fit; or neglecting him if they can't find his slot. Personnel directors do not much try to scrutinize the economy in order to find some activity which is a real opportunity for the boy, and creating an opportunity if they can't find one. To do this would be a horrendous task; I am not sure if it could be done if we wanted to. But the question is whether anything less makes sense if we mean to speak seriously about the troubles of young men.

Surely by now, however, many readers are objecting that this entire argument is pointless because people in *fact* don't think of their jobs in this way at all. *Nobody* asks if a job is useful or honorable (within the limits of business ethics). A man gets a job that pays well, or well enough, that has prestige, and good conditions, or at least tolerable conditions. I agree with these objections as to the fact. (I hope we are wrong.) *But the question is what it means to grow up into such a fact:* "During my productive years I will spend eight hours a day doing what is no good."

Yet economically and vocationally, a very large proportion of the young people are in a more drastic plight than anything so far mentioned. In our society as it is, there are not enough worthy jobs. But if our society, being as it is, were run more efficiently and soberly, for a majority there would soon not be any jobs at all. There is at present nearly full employment and there may be for some years, yet a vast number of young people are rationally unemployable, useless. This paradox is essential to explain their present temper.

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Our society, which is not geared to the cultivation of its young, *is* geared to a profitable expanding production, a so-called high standard of living of mediocre value, and the maintenance of nearly full employment. Politically, the chief of these is full employment. In a crisis, when profitable production is temporarily curtailed, government spending increases and jobs are manufactured. In "normalcy"—a condition of slow boom—the easy credit, installment buying, and artificially induced demand for useless goods, create jobs for all and good profits for some.

Now back in the 30's when the New Deal attempted by hook or crook to put people back to work and give them money to revive the shattered economy, there was an outcry of moral indignation from the conservatives that many of the jobs were "boondoggling," useless made work. It was insisted, and rightly, that such work was demoralizing to the workers themselves. It is a question of a word, but a candid critic might certainly say that many of the jobs in our present "normal" production are useless made work. The tailfins and built-in obsolescence might be called boondoggling. The $64,000 Question and the busy hum of Madison Avenue might certainly be called boondoggling. Certain tax-dodge foundations are boondoggling. What of business lunches and expense accounts? fringe benefits? the comic categories of occupation in the building trades? the extra stagehands and musicians of the theater crafts? These jolly devices to put money back to work no doubt have a demoralizing effect on somebody or other (certainly on me, they make me green with envy), but where is the moral indignation from Top Management?

Suppose we would cut out the boondoggling and gear our society to a more sensible abundance, with efficient production of quality goods, distribution in a natural market, counter-inflation, and sober credit. At once the work week would be cut to, say, twenty hours instead of forty. (Important People have already mentioned the figure thirty.) Or alternately, half the labor force would be unemployed. Suppose too—and how can we not suppose it?—that the automatic machines are put to general use, instead of just getting rid of badly organized unskilled labor. The unemployment will be still more drastic.

To give the most striking example: in steel, the annual increase in productivity is 4 per cent, the plants work at 50 per cent of capacity, and the companies can break even working at *less than 30 per cent* of capacity. These are the conditions that forced the steel strike, as desperate self-protection. (Estes Kefauver, quoting Gardiner Means and Fred Gardner).

Everybody knows this, nobody wants to talk about it much, for we don't know how to cope with it. The effect is that we are living a kind of lie. Long ago, labor used to fight for the shorter work week, but now they don't, because they are pretty sure they don't want it. Indeed, when hours are reduced, the tendency is to get a second, part-time, job and raise the standard of living, *because* the job is meaningless and one must have something; but the standard of living is pretty meaningless too. Nor is this strange atmosphere a new thing. For at least a generation the maximum sensible use of our productivity could have thrown a vast population out of work, or relieved everybody of a lot of useless work, depending on how you take it. (Consider with how little cutback of useful civilian production the economy produced the war goods and maintained an army of unemployed.) The plain truth is that at present very many of us are useless, not needed, rationally unemployable. It is in this paradoxical atmosphere that young persons grow up. It looks busy and expansive, but it is rationally at a stalemate.

These considerations apply to all ages and classes; but it is of course among poor youth (and the aged) that they show up first and worst. These are the most unemployable. Our society has not been geared to the cultivation of the young for a long time. At present 42 per cent have graduated

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high school (predicted Census, 1960); less than 8 per cent have graduated college. The high school trend for at least the near future is not much different, there will be a high proportion of drop-outs; but *markedly more* of the rest are going on to college, that is, the stratification is deepening between those who have prospects and those who have none. Now the schooling in neither the high schools nor the colleges is much good—if it were better more kids would stick to it; yet at present, if we made a list we should find that a large proportion of the dwindling number of unquestionably useful or self-justifying jobs, in the humane professions and the arts and sciences, require education; and in the future, there is no doubt that the more educated will have the jobs in running an efficient highly technical economy and an administrative and verbal society. *"Between 1947 and 1957, professional and technical workers increased 61 per cent, clerical workers 23 per cent, but factory operatives only 4½ per cent and laborers 4 per cent"* (Census).

For the uneducated there will be no jobs at all. This is humanly most unfortunate, for presumably those who have learned something in schools, and have the knack to survive the boredom of those schools, could also make something of idleness; whereas the uneducated are useless at leisure too. It takes application, a fine sense of value, and a powerful community spirit for a people to have serious leisure, and this has not been the genius of the Americans.

From this point of view we can sympathetically understand the pathos of our American school policy, which otherwise seems so inexplicable; at great expense compelling kids to go to school who do not want to and who will not profit by it. There are of course unpedagogic motives, like relieving the home, controlling delinquency, and keeping kids from competing for jobs. But there is also this desperately earnest pedagogic motive, of preparing the kids to take *some* part in a democratic society that does not need them. Otherwise, what will become of them, if they don't know anything?

Compulsory public education spread universally during the 19th century to provide the reading, writing, and arithmetic necessary to build a modern industrial economy. Now with the over-maturity of the economy, the teachers are struggling to preserve the elementary system when the economy no longer requires it and is stingy about paying for it. The demand is for scientists and technicians, the 15 per cent of the "academically talented." "For a vast majority [in the high schools]," says Dr. James Conant in *The Child, the Parent, and the State,* "the vocational courses are the vital core of the program. They represent something related directly to the ambitions of the boys and girls." But somehow, more than 50 per cent quit.

(Let me make a comment on Dr. Conant's vastly publicized report on the high schools. The important question that he fails to ask is why there are only 15 per cent who are "academically talented" enough to take hard subjects. Does he think that the general dullness of the high school population has occurred in a void? And why do large percentages even of the brightest—from 25 per cent to 50 per cent, depending on the region—shirk the hard courses or quit school? What is lacking in their motivation? If he were concerned, as he claims, about conserving human resources, his zeal would be to find why most are so inept and to invent techniques to unblock them and increase the pool of talent. But there is nothing of this in Dr. Conant's report.)

Let us sum up again. The majority of young people are faced with the following alternative: either society is a benevolently frivolous racket in which they'll manage to boondoggle, though less profitably, than the more privileged; or society is serious (and they hope still benevolent enough to support them), but they are useless and hopelessly out. Such thoughts do not encourage productive life. Naturally young people are more sanguine and look for man's work, but few find it. Some settle for a "good job"; most settle for a lousy job; a

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few, but an increasing number, don't settle.

I often ask, "What do you want to work at? If you have the chance. When you get out of school, college, the service, etc."

Some answer right off and tell their definite plans and projects. I'm pleased for them, but it's a bit boring, because they are such squares.

Quite a few will, with prompting, come out with astounding stereotyped conceited fantasies like being a movie actor when they are "discovered"—like "Marlon Brando, but in my own way."

Very rarely somebody will, maybe defiantly and defensively, maybe diffidently but proudly, make you know that he knows very well what he is going to do, is indeed already doing it, which is the real test.

The usual answer, perhaps the normal answer, is "I don't know," meaning, "I'm looking; I haven't found the right thing; it's discouraging but not hopeless."

But the terrible answer is, "Nothing." The young man doesn't want to do anything.

I remember talking to half a dozen young fellows at Van Wagner's Beach outside of Hamilton, Ontario; and all of them had this one thing to say, "Nothing." They didn't believe that what to work at was the kind of thing one *wanted*. They rather expected that two or three of them would work for the electric company in town, but they couldn't care less. I turned away from the conversation abruptly, because of the uncontrollable burning tears in my eyes and pain in my breast. Not feeling sorry for them, but tears of frank dismay for the waste of our humanity (they were nice kids). And it is out of that incident that many years later I am writing this report.

IV

The simple job plight of these adolescents could not be remedied without a social revolution. Therefore it is not astonishing if the most well-intentioned public spokesmen do not mention it at all. But it is hard to grow up in a society where one's important problems are treated as nonexistent. It is impossible to belong to it, it is hard to fight to change it. The effect must be rather to feel disaffected, and all the more restive if one is smothered by well-meaning social workers and PAL's who don't seem to understand the real irk. The boys cannot articulate the real irk themselves, for they haven't learned to say it.

For instance, what public spokesman could discuss the jobs? The ideal of a real job that you risk your soul in and make good or be damned, belongs to the heroic age of capitalist enterprise, imbued with self-righteous beliefs about hard work, thrift, and public morals. Such an ideal might still have been mentioned in public fifty years ago; in our era of risk-insured semi-monopolies and advertised vices, it would be met with a ghastly stillness. Or alternately, to want a job that exercises a man's capacities in an enterprise useful to society, is utopian anarcho-syndicalism, it is labor invading the domain of management. No labor leader has entertained such a thought in our generation. Management has the "sole prerogative" to determine the products and the machines. Again, to speak of the likelihood or the desirability of unemployment, like Norbert Wiener or J. K. Galbraith, is to be politically non-professional.

During, let us say, 1890–1936, on Marxist grounds, the fight for working conditions, for security, wages, hours, the union, the dignity of labor, *was* mentioned, and it gave the worker or the youth something worthwhile. But because of their historical theory of the "alienation of labor" (that the worker *must* become less and less in control of the work of his hands), the Marxist parties never fought for the man-worthy job itself. What is surprising now if workmen accept their alienation, and are indifferent also to Marxist politics?

When the objective factors cannot be mentioned, however, other things are said instead, and let us now examine their style, as applied, for instance to juvenile delinquency, on which there is a good deal of oratory.

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In our times the usual principle of such speech is that the others, the delinquent boys, are not taken seriously as existing, as having real aims in a real world like oneself. They are not condemned, they are not accepted. Instead they are a "youth problem" and the emphasis is on their "background conditions" that one can manipulate, and they are said to be subject to "tensions" that one can alleviate. The aim is not to give human beings real goals that warrant belief, and tasks to share in, but to reestablish "belonging," although this kind of speech and thought is precisely calculated to avoid contact and so makes belonging impossible. When such efforts don't work, one finally takes some of the boys seriously as existing and uses force to make them not exist.

Let me give a childish but important illustration how this works out. A boy has a few great sexual adventures, but then he has had the bad luck to get caught and get in trouble. They try to persuade him by punishment and other explanations that some different behavior is much better, but he knows by the evidence of his senses that nothing could be better. If he gives in, he lives on in a profound disbelief, a disbelief in their candor and a disbelief even in his own body feelings. But if he persists and proves incorrigible, then the evidence of his senses is attached to what is socially punished, explained away, and put away. The basic trouble here is that they do not really believe he has had the sexual experience. The objective factor is inconvenient for them; therefore it cannot exist. Instead, there is *merely* a case of insecure affection at home, slum housing, comic books, and naughty companions—tensions and conditions. My hunch is that this kind of early sexual adventure and misadventure is fairly common in delinquency. It is called precocious, abnormal, artificially stimulated, etc., an index of future delinquency. In my opinion that's rubbish, but be that as it may; what is important in the particular case is that there is a stubborn new fact. Attempting to nullify it makes further growth impossible (and *creates* the future delinquency). The sensible course would be to accept it is a valuable part of future growth. But if this were done, they fear that the approved little hero would be a rotten apple to his peers who would now suddenly *all* have become precocious, abnormal, artificially stimulated, and prone to delinquency.

The sexual plight of these children is officially not mentioned. The revolutionary attack on hypocrisy of Ibsen, Ellis, Dreiser, etc., etc., did not succeed this far. Is it an eccentric opinion that an important part of the kid's restivenes in school from the onset of puberty has to do with puberty? (In his school, Bertrand Russell thought it was better if they had the sex, so they could give their undivided attention to mathematics, which was the main thing.) But since this objective factor does not *exist* in our schools, the school itself begins to be irrelevant. The question here is not whether the sexuality should be discouraged or encouraged. That is an important issue, but far more important is that it is hard to grow up when existing things are treated as though they did not exist. For then there is no dialogue, it is impossible to be taken seriously, to be understood, to make a bridge between oneself and society.

In American society we have perfected a remarkable form of censorship: to allow every one his political right to say what he believes, but to swamp his little boat with literally thousands of millions of newspapers, mass-circulation magazines, best-selling books, broadcasts, and public pronouncements that disregard what he says and give the official way of looking at things. Usually there is no conspiracy to do this; it is simply that what he says is not what people are talking about, it is not newsworthy.

(There is no conspiracy, but it is *not* undeliberate. "If you mean to tell me," said an editor to me, "that our magazine tries to have articles on important issues and treat them in such a way that nothing can come of it—who can deny it?" Try, also, to get a letter printed in the New York *Times* if your view on this issue calls attention to an

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essential factor that is not being mentioned.)

Naturally, the more simply true a statement is in any issue where everybody is quite confused, the less newsworthy it will be, the less it will be what everybody is talking about. When the child in the story said, "But the Emperor has no clothes on!" the newspapers and broadcasts surely devoted many columns to describing the beautiful new clothes and also mentioned the interesting psychological incident of the child. Instead of being proud of him, his parents were ashamed; but on the other hand they received $10,000 in sympathetic contributions toward his rehabilitation, for he was a newsworthy case. But he had a block in reading.

Where there is official censorship it is a sign that speech is serious. Where there is none, it is pretty sure that the official spokesmen have all the loud-speakers.

But let us return to our theme of vocation and develop it a step further. Perhaps the young fellows *really* want to do something, that is, something worthwhile, for only a worthwhile achievement finishes a doing. A person rests when he has finished a real job. If the object is important, it gives structure to many a day's action and dreaming—one might even continue in school. Unfortunately our great society balks us, for it simply does not take seriously the fact, or the possibility, that people want this; nor the philosophic truth that except in worthwhile activity there is no way to be happy. For instance, in a standard questionnaire of a delinquent by Milton Barron, in a hundred headings there does not occur the question, "What do you want to be? What do you want to work at? What do you want to achieve?" (But Donald Taft's *Criminology*, which Barron is adapting, here has the sentence: "Absence of vocational interest at the age when it is normal. . .is telltale of a starved life.")

In despair, the fifteen-year-olds hang around and do nothing at all, neither work nor play. Without a worthwhile prospect, without a sense of justification, the made play of the Police Athletic League is not interesting, it is not their own. They do not do their school work, for they are waiting to quit, and it is harder than it used to be for them to get part-time jobs. Indeed, the young fellows, and not only delinquents, spend a vast amount of time doing nothing. They hang around together, but don't talk about anything, nor even, if you watch their faces, do they passively take in the scene. Conversely, at the movies where the real scene is by-passed, they watch with absorbed fantasy, and afterward sometimes mimic what they saw.

If there is nothing worthwhile, it is hard to do anything at all. When one does nothing, one is threatened by the question whether one *is* nothing. To this insulting doubt, however, there is a lively response: it is a system of values centering around threatened grownup-ness and defensive conceit. This is the so-called "threatened masculinity," not in the sense of being called a girl, but of being called, precisely, "boy," the Negro term of insult. With this, there is an endless compulsion to prove potency and demand esteem. They don't talk about much of interest, but there is a vast amount of hot rhetoric to assert that oneself is as "good as anybody else," no more useless, stupid, nor cowardly. For instance, if they play a game, the interest in the game is weak; they are looking elsewhere when the ball is served, there are lapses in attention, they smoke cigarettes even while playing handball. The interest in victory is surprisingly weak: there is not much glow of self-esteem. But the need for proof is overwhelming: "I won you, didn' I? I won you last week too, didn' I?"

During childhood, they played games with fierce intensity, giving themselves as a sacrifice to the game, for play was the chief business of growth, finding-and-making themselves in the world. Now when they are too old merely to play, to what shall they give themselves with fierce intensity? They cannot play for recreation, since they have not been used up.

The proving behavior is endless. Since

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each activity is not interesting to begin with, its value does not deepen and it does not bear much repetition. Its value as proof rapidly diminishes. In these circumstances, the inevitable tendency is to raise the ante of the compulsive activity that proves one is potent and not useless. (This analysis applies equally to these juveniles and to status-seeking junior executives in business firms and on Madison Avenue.)

It is not surprising, then, that, as Frederic Thrasher says in *The Gang*, "Other things being equal, the imaginative boy has an excellent chance to become the leader of the gang. He has the power to make things interesting for them. He 'thinks up things for us to do.' " At this point let us intervene and say what the Official Spokesmen say.

V

Last summer, after a disastrous week when there were several juvenile murders, Governor Rockefeller of New York made the statement (New York *Times*, September 2, 1959): "We have to constantly devise new ways to bring about a challenge to these young folks and to provide an outlet for their energies and give them a sense of belonging."

The statement is on the highest level of current statesmanship—that is why I have chosen it. It has been coached by sociologists and psychologists. It has the proper therapeutic and not moralistic attitude, and it does not mention the police. (The direct appeal to force came a couple of weeks later, when there were other incidents.)

The gist of it is that the Governor of New York is to play the role that Thrasher assigns to the teen-age gang leader. He is to think up new "challenges." (The word could not have been more unfortunate.) But it is the word "constantly" that is the clue. A challenge can hardly be worthwhile, meaningful, or therapeutic if another must constantly and obsessively be devised to siphon off a new threat of "energy." Is not this raising the ante? Solidly meeting a real need does not have this character.

("The leader," says Thrasher, "sometimes controls the gang by means of summation, i.e., by progressively urging the members from one deed to another, until finally an extreme of some sort is reached.")

My guess is that in playing games the Governor will not have so lively an imagination as the lad he wants to displace as leader; unlike the grownups, the gang will never select him. One of the objective factors that make it hard to grow up is that governors are likely to be men of mediocre humane gifts.

The psychology of the Governor's statement is puzzling. There are no such undifferentiated energies as he speaks of. There are energies of specific functions with specific real objects. In the case here they might be partly as follows: In adolescents a strong energy would be sexual reaching. As with other adolescents, it is thwarted or imperfectly gratified, but these have probably not learned so well as others to cushion the suffering and be patient; so that another strong energy of the delinquents would be diffuse rage of frustration, perhaps directed at a scapegoat. If they have been kept from constructive activity making them feel worthwhile, a part of their energy might be envious and malicious destructiveness of property. As they are powerless, it is spite; and as they are humiliated, it is vengeance. As they feel rejected and misunderstood, as by governors, their energy is woe; but they react to this with cold pride, and all the more fierce gang loyalty to their peers. For which of these specific energies does the Governor of New York seriously plan to devise an outlet? Their own imaginative gang-leader presumably does devise challenges that fit the bill enough to let off steam for a few hours.

What is the sociology of "belonging" here? In the great society they are certainly uprooted. But in the gang their conformity is sickeningly absolute; they have uniform jackets and uniform morals. They speak a jargon and no one has a different idea that might brand him as queer. Since they have shared forbidden behavior, they are all in the same mutually-blackmailing boat and

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correspondingly guilty and suspicious toward the outsider. It is a poor kind of community they have; friendship, affection, personal helpfulness are remarkably lacking in it; they are "cool," afraid to display feeling; yet does the Governor seriously think that he can offer a good community that warrants equal loyalty?

Our society has evolved a social plan, a city plan, an economy and physical plant, in which this delinquent youth is an organic part. The problem is *not* to get them to belong to society, for they belong a priori by being the next generation. The burden of proof and performance is quite the other way: for the system of society to accommodate itself to all its constituent members. But can it be denied that by and large the official practice is to write these boys off as useless and unwanted, and to try to cajole or baffle them into harmlessness?

Suppose we look at it the other way. Like any other constitutional group they exert an annoying pressure, but they are inarticulate. In some dumb way they are surely right, but what the devil do they want? Has much effort been made to ask them and help them find words? We can guess that they want two broad classes of things: changes in the insulting and depriving circumstances that have made them ornery, spiteful, vengeful, conceited, ignorant, and callous—unable to grow; and objective opportunities in which to grow.

Let us go back to the Governor. On the same occasion, he issued to the press the following formal statement: "The problem of juvenile delinquency has no easy remedy. There is no quick or overnight solution. It is compounded of neglect by parents, broken homes, poor living conditions, unhealthy background, economic deprivation, mental disturbance, and lack of religious training." This is not a bad list of background conditions; it satisfies every popular and scientific theory of etiology. The question is, does the Governor seriously not understand how organic these conditions are in our society? They cannot be remedied by gimmicks or social work. He speaks of broken homes; has he some plan to improve the institution of modern marriage, especially among folk for whom it is hardly an institution? The present day urban poor are largely Negro and Spanish, they are excluded from many unions, they often earn less than the minimum wage, they are unschooled; naturally there is economic deprivation, poor living conditions. How is their religion relevant if it is irrelevant to the basic community functions of vocation and war, and wrong on sex? There is no community and not even a community plan; naturally there is unhealthy background.

What great concerted effort is being led by the Governor to remedy these conditions, not overnight, but in the next five, ten, or twenty years?

Indeed, *official* policy has often worked to increase delinquency, rather than remedy it. For instance, in a characteristically earnest analysis, Charles Abrams has shown how the public housing policy has had this effect. Slums have been torn down wholesale, disrupting established community life. By not building on vacant land and by neglecting master planning, our officials have created insoluble problems of relocation and vastly increased the number of one-room flats, making decent family life impossible. (Suppose you were fifteen years old and returned home at 11 P.M., as the Mayor urges, to a room with mama and papa in one bed and two little brothers in your bed and a baby yowling; you might well stay out until four in the morning.) Again, families are ousted from public housing when their incomes increase, so eliminating and penalizing the better models; and on the other hand, other families are expelled on irrelevant moral criteria without thought of what becomes of them. And income segregation in large blocks was itself bound to increase tension, like any segregation. All of this has been *official* policy. The picture gets even grimmer if we turn to the quasi-official graft in Title I that for two- and three-year stretches has stalled either demolition or

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construction, while families pay rent in limbo.

Now finally (January 1960), the Governor's practical anti-delinquency youth program is offered for legislation. Let me summarize its chief points: (1) Reduce the age of felonies to fifteen. (2) Space for 390 more in the forest camps (added to the 110 now there). (3) Admit a few older to these camps. (4) Establish "Youth Opportunity Centers"—residences for youths "on the verge of delinquency." (5) Provide "halfway houses" for those in transition from institutions to freedom. (6) Certify boardinghouses to which the court can direct the youngsters. (7) Ease compulsory continuation school. (8) Permit after-school work from fourteen to sixteen. (9) Encourage work-and-study programs "to keep potential dropouts in school long enough to prepare for employment." (10) Centralize probation services. (11) Increase probation staff.

Of these eleven points, eight seem to be aimed primarily at punishment or control: the boys are really unwanted, the problem is to render them harmless. Only two (8 and 9) envisage, very unimpressively, a substantive change. What on earth has happened to devising "new ways, constant challenges"? But let me call attention to the forest work camps (2 and 3). There is good evidence that these are excellent and have provided a rewarding experience. But then certainly they should be made available not for convicted delinquents as such, but for all kids who want to work there a year. Naturally, however, there is no money—not even for more than five hundred delinquent boys altogether. The question is whether or not such a program of camps for many thousand boys is less important than one of the Park Commissioner's new highways to Westchester. Until they will face that question, our public officials are not serious.

Positively, the delinquent behavior seems to speak clearly enough. It asks for manly opportunities to work, make a little money, and have self-esteem; to have some space to bang around in that is not always somebody's property; to have better schools to open for them horizons of interest; to have more and better sex without fear or shame; to share somehow in the symbolic goods (like the cars) that are made so much of; to have a community and a country to be loyal to; to claim attention and have a voice. These are not outlandish demands. Certainly they cannot be satisfied directly in our present system, they are baffling. That is why the problem is baffling, and the final recourse is to a curfew, to ordinances against carrying knives, to threatening the parents, to reformatories with newfangled names, and to eleven hundred more police on the streets.

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ALFRED KAZIN

In Puerto Rico

■ Long before the ice-cream man comes down the block (twice a day) you can hear his truck playing Brahms's "Lullaby" over the loudspeaker, and after he is gone, the sweet and gluey tones (a little like the tasteless local ice cream itself) still linger maddeningly on the air. Over and over and over, the music box repeats the treacly phrase—tum-te-*tum,* tum-te-*tum,* tum-te-*tum tum tum tum!*—and you think, probably that's what Chinese water torture used to be like, used to be like, only you didn't think it would come to the cadence of Brahms's "Lullaby"! But finally he takes himself down the street of identical pink and blue stucco houses, and the nothingness of the long day takes over.

Time is longer here than elsewhere; the day begins early, as it does in all the hot Latin countries; at 7 A.M. people are already walking across the garbage-strewn fields next to our house that are a short cut to the 65th Infantry Road, the highway to the airport; they are beginning to lay out streets on these fields; soon there will be more identical pink and blue stucco houses; the men are already at work. And already it's hot: the even late summer heat of Puerto Rico that before noon clamps you around the back and chest, and that will go on all day and late into the evening, interrupted only by the sudden rains that stop as quickly as they come, and that end always in the same heavy clamping late-summer heat.

The day begins early and it begins indistinguishably from the rest of the day and from all the other days. Across the empty fields back of street number 1, house number 14 (there are so many new developments in Puerto Rico that they no longer bother to give names to such streets), the brown-faced men and women are already going to work, and as you look at the faces, the curious stillness is already on them—the stillness that always seems inertness in the presence of the "continental," the "American," the stillness that in my students at the University I can no longer tell from a deeply resistant shyness. "Feed my lambs." . . . There is a lamb in the official seal of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and in truth these people *are* lamblike. We laugh when an outbreak of rapings in Santurce calls out headlines in the *Island Times:* "NEW YORK-TYPE GANGS"; but as they say, there *was* no such violence here until Puerto Ricans came back to the Island. I believe them, for their famous docility (which can also be interpreted as the apathy of tropical countries and the Step'n Fetchit sloth in the presence of Americans barking questions in the language they do not know and no longer even pretend to know) shows itself all day long and every day in a variety of silences and withdrawals. Even on the road—and they are the most erratic drivers in the world, with a sickening record of accidents—they will commit every fault but that of excessive speed. They drive, in

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fact, as if they were on muleback; they drive *en famille,* arms perpetually hanging out of the car, talking and eating as if they were home; but they are not aggressive. They are used to waiting on life, waiting on other people; they are used to taking orders; they are "sensitive" beyond endurance, but not stormy. The long long hot day long ago took them over, and the sudden rainstorms —to say nothing of the Spanish generals, the Spanish bishops, the Spanish slave owners and feudal owners, and now. . . . And now the bishops are still never Puerto Ricans but are American Irish, and the girl behind the automatic cash register at the *supermercado* (run by Grand Union, development by Laurance Rockefeller) may not speak English but she has learned to say "okay, you bet, next aisle, please," and *my* lambs are reading Emerson and Thoreau, you bet! "In transcendentalism is implied that there is knowledge of transcendental elements. In these three passages are implied in the following way: Emerson: During these days the people is getting rid of the traditional feelings. . . ."

Are they "docile" because someone has always taken them over—or are they just docile? To me they are the waifs and wards of big power politics, the submerged colonial mass incarnate, the emerging masses in Africa and South America and the East Indies—the mass just getting itself up through the crust of poverty, racism, and the bush, and which, as it gets up, is immediately handed a television program and a subscription to *Confidential.* The Puerto Ricans are always being reformed, educated, studied, analyzed, worked on, "developed" by others. Just now they are being worked on by the most intelligent and social-minded administration in Latin America, and thanks to the massive infusion of American capital and the rapid industrialization of the island, Puerto Rico is now the most prosperous and fastest growing economy in this area. But as I see from the complaints of Puerto Rican students who have been to the States, they are very quick to suspect, to misunderstand, to be hurt—and somehow I hear from them more of what they have suffered from Americans than of what they *think* of Americans. It must be this passivity that explains the hilarious number of anthropologists and sociologists forever prowling this island. I am told that there is still no really good history of Puerto Rico. But let a young American loose with a foundation grant and a manual of behavior patterns, and he doesn't need to know any history, for he can always look into breast-feeding patterns in the purely Negro areas, or study spiritualism.

It's all such a gold mine, either for the American sociologist or the American chain store; two and a half million Puerto Ricans waiting to get into Woolworth's, Franklin's, Kresge's, Grand Union, and as they wait, they can get their resources counted and their "patterns" studied. They won't object: why should they? The boy who stands all day long outside the big hotel on the Avenida Norte trying to get rid of the few coconuts he brought down this morning will before long move into the hotel and learn to serve ten different kinds of rum drinks to the *alrightniks* in the swimming pool—and he will still have the same far, faraway look on his face. The *alrightniks* will never *see* him, any more than they see his cousins and brothers in New York; and truth to tell, he doesn't have the information and undoubtedly lacks the curiosity with which to see *them.* The Puerto Ricans live on an island in every sense of the word: they are here, and their minds don't roam around much. Talking with university students about American writers, I have been struck by their refusal to visualize New England landscape or wintry weather. It's not simply that they haven't seen snow: neither had the young heroine of Carson McCullers' novel who so longed to see some. It's that they are here and cannot easily imagine anything too different from their island, their town. For centuries they were wrapped round in the torpor of the Spanish Empire, and their island was never of major significance to the Spaniards themselves. Puerto Rico was largely the taking-off place for Spain,

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the "rich port," in which anchored the galleons bearing the gold back to Spain from Mexico, a last place to which Spanish royal troops retreated from South America after losing to Bolivar.

Richard Morse, head of the institute at the University for regional studies of the Caribbean, has written a paper on "The Deceptive Transformation of Puerto Rico" in which he points out that there was less transplantation of Spanish society here than anywhere else in Latin America. This explains why even the most ignorant foreigner somehow senses the lack of any real cultural tradition here, of any firm national identity. Not only was there no strongly organized society here under the Spaniards, says Morse, but Puerto Rico even lacked the spontaneous spirit of organization and economic thrift which produces a flourishing class of independent farmers. No wonder that there have been no real group identities here for the sociologists to seize on, not enough "rituals of celebration": even Catholicism has never been an all-dominating cultural force here, for the Spanish priests were always regarded as agents of Madrid, and evangelical Protestantism has taken hold here as it has nowhere else in Latin America. Morse believes that the island itself has always been passive to history, that it has usually been subject to violence from without, whether by hurricanes or buccaneers or French, British, or Dutch invaders. It has *always* depended for its sustenance and progress upon more highly organized institutions and societies abroad, and even in the heyday of the Spanish Empire depended on a periodic financial subsidy from vice-regal Mexico (the famous *situado*), on contraband trade with European ships and with the plantation islands of the lesser Antilles. Now it depends on the skills, capital, and industrializing organization of the United States.

Morse's paper, which I discovered thanks to sarcastic comments on it by a columnist in the *Island Times,* explains a good deal of what troubles me about Puerto Ricans—as much here as in the United States. If there is no strong local tradition on the part of migrating groups, if there is no articulated and positive ideal in their own history for which they seek expression and fulfillment in the new country —as was true of the Irish with their longing for political emancipation and religious tolerance, of the German democrats and liberals who loved the republican idea, of the land-hungry Italian peasants and the oppressed East European Jews—then it follows that some of these "newcomers," as Oscar Handlin calls them, will not consciously seek any real attachment with American culture. Handlin thinks that for Puerto Ricans the "break of migration" is not "as sharp as it had been for Europeans. . . . Such newcomers did not feel the complete and total sense of foreignness that overwhelmed the European immigrants, and, therefore, did not feel called upon to create the institutions which were the response to the shock of separation." But in Puerto Rico itself one discovers on every hand that these cultural institutions have never existed, and so cannot arbitrarily be created in New York. As many a schoolteacher in East Harlem has learned, Puerto Rican kids are often as illiterate in Spanish as they remain in English; and judging from the frenzied missionary effort of the Catholic church to reclaim Puerto Ricans in New York for the faith, they often arrive without any real religious traditions at all. Handlin thinks that Puerto Ricans have a sense of connectedness with the United States because they are already American citizens. But I think that it is because citizenship has simply been granted *en bloc,* because they have not had to earn it as a voluntary and individual act, that they lack connectedness with the United States and even with its language. During the Korean war many Puerto Ricans in the American forces were killed, Dan Wakefield says in *Island in the City,* almost as a direct result of not knowing English, and he suggests that the American army was at fault at not assigning these

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troops to officers who could give orders in Spanish. But it must be a powerful feeling of separation from the United States that will keep a soldier from learning enough English to keep himself alive, as so many refugees did. And lecturing in English here in Puerto Rico, I can testify that this feeling of separation exists; I have taught American literature all over Western Europe, but have never had such trouble communicating with my students as I do here. The United States figures here simply as Big Brother, and my boys and girls don't quite believe in what I am saying—or in its possible relevance to them. The more prosperous ones do, of the class from which Jose Ferrer came. In 1949, when Ferrer was given the medal of the National Academy of Arts and Letters for the best diction by any actor on the American stage, I heard him deliver a bitter and powerful attack on intolerance against Puerto Ricans, and truly, *his* diction was beautiful. But his complaints against the inhumanity of the city don't help me much when I go over a page of Thoreau or Melville with my students. I have never cared for the humor of H*Y*M*A*N K*A*P-L*A*N, but he tried, didn't he? Yes, yes, my students try, too, and the babble from the speech clinic is all around me as I teach. But let us say that they try without hope; they don't really believe, as J. Robert Oppenheimer once said of his German-born father, that being an American citizen seemed to him the greatest privilege in the world. And why don't they believe it? Because individuals among them are treated with disrespect, as are individuals among Negroes, Italians, Jews, California-born Japanese? It is because they see themselves as wards of the state, as colonials, not as immigrants; it is because they are "associated" with the United States, not attached to it. They are in no position to see what they can make of the United States; they are in positions only to suffer from it.

HISTORICALLY, the great achievement of the United States as a civilization has been its creation not of a tradition but of a promise; it has been extraordinary in its ability to suggest to all peoples the fulfillment of their particular hopes. If anything, it has promised the fulfillment of too many: this is why immigrants jokingly curse Columbus, for having prepared the frustration with the promise. There is a kind of bitterness about America which is the other side of the universal and infinite hopes connected with it. As F. Scott Fitzgerald said, France was a land and England a people, but America, "having about it still that quality of the idea, [is] harder to utter." Even Mark Twain, who like all his generation in the West was an immigrant from a fabulous natural world to the era of Mark Hanna and Rockefeller, spoke like an immigrant when he said crossly that wonderful as it was to discover America, it would have been more wonderful to lose it. No country can disappoint like America, for no other country has aroused so many hopes. But such hopes can arise only from an identity of one's own and a specific tradition sharp enough to arouse the possibility of its fulfillment in this country. Otherwise there is no spiritual marriage at all between America and its newcomers, and the great epic of immigration simply becomes a picture of the lesser breeds attached to the white Protestant majority.

Richard Morse says that the essential lack of direction behind the "spillage" of American capital and techniques into Puerto Rico has merely perpetuated and deepened the instability of the Puerto Ricans, and that the industrial boom has significantly lacked any counterpart in agriculture or education or city planning. Now "the hard shell of top-level technocrats covers an underbody of soft institutions." Needless to say, Governor Muñoz Marín is worried about this situation, and now that massive industrialization, "Operation Bootstrap," is so brilliantly under way, he has called for "Operation Serenity," for a massive cultural and spiritual effort to close up the gap behind Puerto Rico's industrial progress. If Puerto Rico is "the Formosa of the New Dealers," Muñoz Marín—and his equally brilliant wife—are

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certainly not the Chiang Kai-sheks. Muñoz Marín's salary is astonishingly modest; he has refused pay increases, and he is as imaginative and dedicated to the welfare of his people as an administrator can be. The United States would be fortunate indeed if it were led with half as much imagination and eloquence as Puerto Rico is by the present commonwealth government. But in Puerto Rico all such operations, whether toward industrialization or "serenity," seem to percolate downward; and Luis Muñoz Marín, with his warm heart and his quick brain, is still in the tradition of a famous father and of the Puerto Rican intellectual elite, a teacher and reformer from the governor's palace. And because he represents so much of what is best in the American Democratic party, New Deal wing, his friends worry over what may happen to Puerto Rico in Washington—where its fate has so often been decided—if the Republicans, some of whose leaders have repeatedly expressed their contempt for Puerto Rico and all its works, win again in 1960.

When a people has never had a chance to work out a deep national identity of its own, when its experience has fundamentally been that of dependency, when even in its religious practice it shows an inner mutinousness against the beliefs imposed by the conqueror—then it must seek in external political solutions at least the sign of the independence and unity it has lacked in the past. Whether under the Spaniards or under the Americans, the Puerto Ricans have always debated the same problem—whether to be "associated" with the larger country, or to be independent of it, or to become directly part of it. The Puerto Ricans were granted autonomy within the Spanish Empire just as the Spanish-American war broke out. Since this was followed by American domination of the island, Puerto Ricans think that the everlasting problem of their political status might have been solved if it had not been for the war of 1898. But even if one grants the closer ties to Spain, it is obvious, from the continued restiveness of the Puerto Ricans under commonwealth status and a native administration, that Muñoz Marín's hope—to deflect the agitation for purely formal solutions into a massive effort to raise living standards—has in the first respect not succeeded. The Puerto Ricans are very busy debating statehood versus commonwealth status, and there is still a core of intellectuals with strong faith in Puerto Rico's national culture who are simply for independence, while the hard-bitten extremists who tried to kill Truman and shot up Congress are still represented by the Nationalist party. Muñoz Marín, who was once simply for independence and now of course strongly backs commonwealth status, tried to detour the statehood movement by coming up with a new formula: there would be time to consider statehood only when the per capita wealth of the islanders reached that of the poorest state in the union (Mississippi); it was calculated that this would happen in the 1990's. Without directly opposing statehood, Muñoz Marín managed to give the pro-commonwealth forces a handle against it, and the next day the New York *Times* editorially applauded Muñoz Marín for his brilliant and thoughtful solution. But while the *Times* drew a sigh of obvious relief at being able to put the problem off for thirty years, at least a few Puerto Rican intellectuals pointed out that even considering statehood wholly in economic terms was distinctly not complimentary to the United States.

The demand for statehood is probably strongest in the prospering new middle class. Now that they travel like Americans between San Juan and New York, or gaily study psychoanalysis in Iowa City and the theater arts in Dallas (unlike the poorer and darker-skinned Puerto Ricans, who arrive on the hideous economy flight that seems to be the airlines' effort to duplicate the steerage in mid-air), many businessmen and doctors and lawyers are all for statehood, and you can see in the rear windows of the newer and bigger cars stickers asking for admission of Puerto Rico as the fifty-first state. But obviously statehood is spiritually

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inconceivable to Governor Muñoz Marín—and many Puerto Ricans—and how else should it be? They are Latin Americans; their language is Spanish; and Governor Muñoz Marín, one of the principal advisers to Washington on Latin American policy, is, as head of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, a far more dignified and significant figure than he would be as head of just another American state. Understandably, since by now many Puerto Ricans feel closer to the elites on the mainland than they do to the peasants in the hills, statehood promises more secure personal status. So with one thing and another, the everlasting argument about what Puerto Rico is to be still boils over. And how it fascinates and enthralls! How many stickers in the back of how many cars! What endless excitement! Like the Russians of the 19th century debating Slavophil against Westerner, the Puerto Rican may yet discover that debates about which culture to join up with are a symbol of national powerlessness. But in Puerto Rico these debates cannot conceal the fact that there is no positive, rich, and glowing national past either to save from the Americans or to affiliate with them.

And to make the situation even drearier, the American businessmen and technical experts and supermarket designers who in typical American fashion have "expertise" without culture, who no longer have any intellectual convictions of their own with which they can either challenge, or adopt, or reject the culture of others, are now all "liberals" to a man, sympathetic to Puerto Rico as a matter of course, and sit around the bars discussing affiliation versus independence as if this gummy question were one that *they* could answer. If ever proof were needed that Americans do not have enough pride and self-knowledge even to think of themselves as "imperialist" custodians of the "lesser breeds," it can be found in Puerto Rico. The manager of a soft-drink company told me that he thought the United States should "hold on" to the island, whatever the cost to us, only in order to show the world how beneficent and richly devoted to the welfare of other peoples we can be. This would show up Russia in the eyes of the world and give us a higher score in the cold war. Most of the Americans I meet here don't even think of themselves as "holding on" to Puerto Rico. The intellectuals at the University, many of whom came expecting a breath of Latin culture, a whiff of the mother continent, by now either feel like Puerto Ricans or just feel sorry for them; whereas the technical experts, the airlines personnel, and the journalists find it all too easy not to think beyond their jobs. This in part I can understand, since the heat, the perpetual need of a lift, the lack of the more oppressive stateside taxes on liquor and the bathfuls constantly being flown in from the free ports of the Virgin Islands—to say nothing of the fact that you can conveniently buy your liquor in the *supermercado* and that the rum is cheap and the local beer excellent—make this place a perpetual New Year's Eve party. The swimming pool is never far from the bar, and all you need to cover your nakedness is a credit card.

Of course there are other Americans who do not drink at all. There is a whole group of evangelical young American physicians who have given up big incomes in the United States to build up medical stations like Castaner, in the middle of the island—which can be reached only by mountain roads so winding that people in small cars often take dramamine. And there are young writers and artists at the university in Rio Piedras who are there out of a deep interest in Hispanic culture, who know their Lorca and their Machado as well as they know their Hart Crane, and so are not as homesick as I am when I read my students' papers on *The Great Gatsby*. They do not believe in the press-agent talk of Puerto Rico as a "hybrid" of two cultures; they are there for the Spanish, like the wonderful Spanish Loyalist scholars you run into at the University. But between the young American officers here and in the Virgin Islands, who like the medical scientists here seem virtually the last Americans

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with a keen professional edge to their lives, there is a whole group of Americans who have come here in flight: from broken marriages, from the lifelong stigma of having once belonged to the Communist party, from . . . the difficulties and pains of not being better than they are. An American Somerset Maugham could do a picturesque novel on the drifters, the ex-radicals, the drunks, the queers, the invalids seeking the sun, the missionaries, the Southern crackers who have gravitated here as a matter of course and interestingly have learned to be civil to their Negro neighbors. And what I mind most about Puerto Rico is not that this island absorbs so many Americans, but that it enervates them, gives them no mark to shoot at, nothing hard, clear, perfect of its kind to be equal to. The torpidity I mind as I mind it anywhere, whether in Latin America or in those parts of the United States where insularism makes itself felt, sooner or later, in the same peculiarly thin, two-dimensional quality of a society wholly "modern," without tradition and without ideas. The Spanish Republicans in Puerto Rico do not have this peculiar sensitiveness without pride, this readiness to take offense from a stranger; the Englishwoman at the University speech clinic, who has spent much of her life teaching Latin Americans, does not have it. But with Puerto Ricans one always finds oneself discussing their feelings and their sufferings, never their ideas and their hopes.

And so history always repeats itself here as the sterile tale of the bigger nation and its Puerto Rican victim. Unfortunately, there is not as much time left for Puerto Ricans as there used to be, for as everything moves faster and faster even as the subject nations and peoples come forward, there is barely a chance to make up for the centuries of intellectual numbness before the smoothing out process of mass culture takes over. Independence will not create in Puerto Ricans the past they lack; statehood, should it ever be granted, will not automatically create the self-respect they seek; the present commonwealth status of "association" will continue to symbolize the uneasiness that must persist so long as the people do not know what to hope for—or the direction from which their hope is to come.

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KINGSLEY DAVIS
JUDITH BLAKE

Birth Control and Public Policy

■ Until recently, the birth control movement was a ladies' volunteer affair, publicly regarded as either inconsequential or embarrassing. At the same time, Americans were privately exhibiting a remarkable consensus of opinion on the subject of birth control, and acting accordingly. In 1943 a *Fortune* poll found 85 per cent of American women saying that birth control should be available to all married women. The results of a sociological study just released by the University of Michigan and the Scripps Foundation show that, in 1955, 94 per cent of all white couples in America in the reproductive ages were either trying or intending to regulate conception, or they were not sufficiently fertile to require such regulation. In practice birth control—for the healthful spacing of children as well as for limiting the size of families—is securely woven into the fabric of American life, but public silence and special-interest pressures have prevented the wide recognition of this fact.

During the past few months, however, family planning has attained a political eminence that would have amazed its old-time advocates; even the most prominent politicians have recently been forced to voice an opinion on a subject once scarcely ever mentioned in public. This revolution was precipitated when, on November 25, 1959, the Roman Catholic bishops of the United States issued a statement attacking the idea that an American or international agency should use United States funds to help underdeveloped countries lower their birth rates; the idea had been repeatedly proposed by advisory groups. By thus ostensibly committing some forty million Americans of the Roman Catholic faith (including candidates for public offices) on a question of foreign policy, the bishops moved birth control out from the wings into the spotlight of the American political stage. It thereby became possible for the American people to discover that a practical consensus has in fact been reached on the issue of birth control, and the bishops at the same time provided an opportunity for this consensus to express itself in public policy.

At work in the background of the controversy which the bishops' statement has served to bring into sharp public focus are the two facts of population growth abroad and civil restraint at home. On the one hand, many observers feel that it would be irresponsible for the people and the government of the United States to ignore the unprecedented and still accelerating rate of population growth throughout the world

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(above all in the poorer countries) as a possible cause of chronic poverty and political instability; the United States, it should be noted, has contributed to the situation by humanely helping to lower the death rates of the poorer countries. On the other hand, Protestants and Jews at home have grown increasingly restive under laws and regulations that obstruct them from acting in accordance with their own religious precepts as regards family planning, and they resent having these precepts denounced as immoral. Questions of civil liberties and of the relations between church and state are implicated here; in analyzing the current controversy, it would be best to begin with them.

IN THEIR statement, the bishops reaffirmed the traditional position of the Roman Catholic church, according to which all methods of birth control (other than complete abstinence and the continence of the "rhythm" system) are violations of the "natural law of God." Since—as Pope Pius XI put it—"the conjugal act is destined primarily for the begetting of children," then evading this purpose by chemical or mechanical means is "to sin against nature and commit a deed which is shameful and intrinsically vicious." This prescription is neither subject to change nor applicable only to Catholics; in the words of Pope Pius XII, it "will hold tomorrow and always, for it is not a mere precept of human right but the expression of a natural and divine law."

Now the attempt to persuade others of the truth of their views is a religious obligation of all Catholics; whether or not they are also obligated to exert political pressure in an effort to *enforce* these views on the others is a question on which informed Catholics themselves seem to differ. The record, however, suggests that the Catholic clergy in America has often resorted to political pressure and legislative coercion, and in the area of birth control this has sometimes led to what can be interpreted as an infringement of democratic values. Citizens in a democracy have the right and the duty to think for themselves on matters of public policy, and they must therefore have free access to the relevant knowledge and an opportunity to participate in open discussion. Nevertheless, the Catholic clergy has used its influence to prevent the public from understanding, acquiring, and employing modern medically approved birth control devices. It strongly supported the erstwhile ban in New York City hospitals against contraceptive therapy regardless of the patient's religion. It has consistently resisted efforts to change the Connecticut laws prohibiting the use of contraceptives and forbidding doctors to prescribe them even when the life of the patient would be endangered by pregnancy.* It withdraws or threatens to withdraw from community welfare councils if birth control assistance is offered to clients. Further, denying that this is a matter for individual discretion, the hierarchy undertakes to speak for all Roman Catholics on the public policies involved, thereby maneuvering to commit them in advance.

Being by far the largest and most centrally organized clergy in the country, the Roman Catholic church can bring more political pressure to bear than any other ecclesiastical group. For this reason alone, it is misleading to equate the political status of Catholicism with that of any other faith. Whether a Catholic president would be more deeply influenced by his religious convictions than, say, a Methodist, is beside the point; the question is whether he would be subjected to greater ecclesiastical pressure. This is what prompted Episcopal Bishop James A. Pike of California to ask if the policy laid down by the hierarchy on birth control is "binding on Roman Catholic

* The two Connecticut statutes date from 1879. They were not originally put on the books because of Catholic pressure, but in the legislative battles fought over them every year in recent times representatives of the Roman Catholic church regularly testify in opposition to changing the laws, and legislators are afraid to counter the sentiments of a politically powerful group. Since the Connecticut Supreme Court has refused to declare these statutes unconstitutional, the case of Buxton, Doe, Noe, and Poe will doubtless go to the United States Supreme Court.

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candidates for public office." And the fact that even non-Catholic officials, fearful of Catholic pressure, will sometimes publicly subscribe to the position of the church on public issues instead of following their own views, contributes to the general uneasiness over Senator Kennedy's candidacy.

Unfortunately, the church-state problem in the area of birth control is often seen simply as a conflict between Catholics and non-Catholics, and this misconception is furthered by attributing to all Catholics the views of the clergy, or by assuming that Protestants are prejudiced when they query Catholic candidates on birth control. But even in countries like Mexico, Argentina, Belgium, and Italy—where virtually the whole population is Catholic, and where conflict with other religious groups is consequently ruled out—a church-state problem still exists as an invariable cause of bitter struggle. The truth is that Catholics are loyal to their country as well as to their church, and in a society like our own, they inevitably share the democratic values of the community at large. The tension between church and state is therefore not a matter of conflict between different groups of citizens—as it is frequently portrayed—but a tension *within* each individual and *within* each group. Nothing brings this out more clearly than the birth control question.

Let us consider, for example, the assumption made by the bishops, and by most of their critics, that they speak for all American Catholics in saying they "will not support any public assistance, either at home or abroad, to promote artificial birth prevention." If it were really possible for the clergy of any major religious group to "deliver" the vote of its adherents at the polls, our national life would turn into a sullen and uneasy equilibrium among competing theocratic camps. The assumption of the bishops may be understandable, but there is evidence to show that it rests on shaky foundations. If they speak for many Catholics on the issue of birth control, certainly they do not speak for all, perhaps not even for a majority.

Surveys have repeatedly demonstrated that although Catholics generally favor birth control less solidly than other groups, they do favor it in substantial proportions. The Michigan-Scripps study of a national sample of wives aged eighteen to thirty-nine found that 85 per cent of the Protestant wives and 45 per cent of the Catholic ones approved of deliberate family limitation. Four-fifths of the Catholic wives capable of conceiving had used some means of birth control, and over half of them a method banned by the clergy. Statistical breakdowns of the clientele of various birth-control clinics have also shown that a good proportion of the women are Catholics. Moreover, in predominantly Catholic countries such as Italy, France, and Belgium the low birth rate suggests that efficient contraception is being practiced (the birth rate in Italy is only 17.9 as against 24.3 in the United States). In Puerto Rico in 1953 a sample of almost a thousand mothers were asked why, if they were not using contraception, they refrained from doing so; fewer than 10 per cent of the Catholic mothers gave religious objections as a reason, although they were well aware of the official church attitude. In Jamaica, among a representative sample of 1,368 women from low-income groups, the Catholics not only desired and had actually borne fewer children than the non-Catholics, but also expressed a more favorable attitude toward birth control. And the proportion of Catholic women (18 per cent) among the first 6,000 admissions to the Kingston Family Planning Clinic (a private organization) was virtually the same as the Catholic proportion of the total population of Kingston.

These findings, generally overlooked in the public debates, indicate that even devout Catholic laymen do not automatically think or do what their religious leaders tell them. Like their fellow citizens of other faiths, American Catholics, being American as well as Catholic, accept the validity of individual conscience, the desirability of

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free discussion, and the right to make up one's own mind on public issues. They are no less ambitious for their children than other Americans; and they feel they can rear them better if they are not burdened by too great a number. At the same time, however, they are far from indifferent to the official doctrines of their church, and the result is a compromise which must be personally painful to many. According to the Michigan-Scripps study, among Catholic wives using some method of birth control, 40 per cent of those who attend church regularly and 83 per cent of those who "seldom or never" go to church employ a method other than the officially approved one of "rhythm."

CATHOLIC couples who wish to limit their families without violating church doctrine suffer a serious disadvantage in that the "rhythm" method is technically difficult to apply. In theory, "rhythm" can be effective if a woman's ovulatory cycle is regular, but the determination of this cycle involves months of record-keeping (and abstinence) before the practice itself can begin, and it also involves careful calculation during each month that the method is actually used. It has proved considerably less reliable than chemical or mechanical means because the woman's cycle may change or she may miscalculate. Moreover, if her cycles are generally irregular, or if she is very young, or if she is lactating, the method becomes altogether useless. Any attempt to apply an "omnibus rule" to all women will simply guarantee pregnancy for most of them. It was for such reasons that an experiment conducted by the World Health Organization and the UN to teach Indian women the "rhythm" system ended in failure: although three out of four of the women initially interviewed wanted to practice birth control, they found such a complicated method difficult to use. For example, it proved possible successfully to teach the "rhythm" method to scarcely more than a hundred of the 811 rural women in this experiment. Three-fourths of the others could not practice it because they were lactating, had irregular cycles, or had become pregnant during the "observation period" necessary to determine their cycles. Only 41 per cent of the women who finally learned this method practiced it regularly; and even among these, unwanted pregnancies occurred, some ending in induced abortion.

All this being the case, to call the "rhythm" method "natural"—as the church does—while branding simpler methods "artificial" is apt to strike the Catholic couple as hair-splitting. They may even know from their Protestant and Jewish friends that many denominations have officially declared justifiable family planning to be a moral duty. It can hardly be a matter for wonder, therefore, that after one or two failures with "rhythm" many Catholic couples are driven to adopting a better method. The Michigan-Scripps study found that Catholic couples in America who have tried "rhythm" tend to switch to mechanical means of contraception once accidental pregnancies have occurred; after ten years of marriage, half of these couples, if still fecund, were resorting to some other method.

By insisting that the faithful obey the official birth control doctrine, the hierarchy risks alienating its own laity. It may conceivably escape this danger by continuing in the attempt to enforce its doctrine on everybody, for the consequent resentment of others at such enforcement might in that case be directed against all Catholics, who would then be defensively driven to identify with the clergy. Mindful of the high price in national disunity that a situation of that kind would involve, the American Catholic clergy may eventually decide to temper its militancy in the matter of birth control. This need not mean a change of doctrine; it would require only a willingness to stop trying to enforce the Catholic view through legislation and pressure.

The recent pronouncement of the bishops on foreign aid, however, showed no sign of a desire to push in the direction of political temperance. They uncompromisingly opposed any assistance for modern, medically

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approved methods of birth control in underdeveloped areas, regardless of the wishes of the people in those areas. Their action provoked a sharper political debate than the bishops may have anticipated, for public concern over soaring populations was (and is) deeper than it had previously appeared to be. Senator Kennedy was immediately asked how he, as a presidential candidate, felt about the problem, and he declared that our government ought not "advocate" that other countries limit their populations—"a kind of mean patriotism, which I think they would find most objectionable." Although when brought back to the issue by James Reston of the New York *Times,* he acknowledged that to refuse a *request* for aid by a country eager to develop a birth control program would itself be "a kind of intervention," his irrelevant "no compulsion" theme was picked up and repeated by Paul Butler, Dr. Tom Dooley, Robert A. Wagner, and others. Mayor Wagner, when pressed to say what he would do if such aid were requested, refused to answer on the ground that "the question is not one before the city." Adlai Stevenson and Senator Symington, evidently better informed about the present situation in underdeveloped areas, favored considering requests to help set up birth control programs in countries where population growth stands in the way of economic progress.

THE "no compulsion" response took advantage of the common misapprehension that people in underdeveloped areas reject the idea of family planning. But high birth rates do not indicate opposition to or lack of interest in family planning; they are, in fact, important in creating such an interest. The revolutionary decline in infant and childhood mortality that has been taking place in the "backward" regions of the world means that families in these regions are now much larger than they used to be. This change has combined with rapid urbanization and rising ambitions to cause people in the underdeveloped areas to look with ever increasing favor on birth control. Numerous field studies made by sociologists and demographers in crowded agrarian countries like India, Puerto Rico, and Jamaica clearly point to the growth of a desire for small families (two or three children) and an interest in learning how to implement this desire.

For example, it was found by researchers working in 1951–53 in and around Bangalore, India, under the joint auspices of the Indian government and the United Nations, that over 40 per cent of the urban and over a fourth of the rural women with one to three living offspring wanted to have no more children. Among women with four to six children, the proportion who wanted no more rose to 75 and 60 per cent of the urban and rural women respectively. Another study, conducted at about the same time with the assistance of World Health Organization and the United Nations, revealed that three-fourths of the couples in 14 villages of Mysore State wished to learn some method of birth control, while a 1952 survey in Uttar Pradesh found 60 per cent of the women and 65 per cent of the men similarly inclined. Reports from family planning clinics all over India confirm this growing interest. The Indian health minister, in a speech last August, stated that the total sale of contraceptives in 1958 by five Indian firms was twelve times greater than it had been in 1956, and he further noted that young village women were becoming more and more willing to participate in group discussions of contraception. Obviously the attempt of the Indian government to fight runaway population growth is not being met by public resentment. As far back as 1940 the Congress Party's National Planning Committee urged the government "to spread knowledge of cheap and safe methods of birth control" and to establish birth control clinics. This policy has been consistently pursued since 1951—though backed by scanter financial resources than some would like to see being used for the purpose. Recently about 800 clinics were in operation in rural areas alone, and the prospective Third Five Year Plan envisages about

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35,000 centers in the nation as a whole. The number of sterilizations reported in 1958 was 18,559; the estimate for Madras City alone is 20,000 per year by the end of 1961.

In Puerto Rico family planning services have been available since 1939 in 160 government clinics, carrying out "Law 136," which was passed in 1937 and which stipulated that the people be given modern contraceptive materials and information and that sterilization be permitted if a physician deems it beneficial. This has not been a high-pressure program of propaganda and mass education, but a quiet and often half-hearted attempt to provide facilities. Yet the 1953 survey mentioned above found 35 per cent of the sample practicing birth control; half of these women had submitted to sterilization, and only 16 per cent were employing either of the two methods approved by the church—"rhythm" or abstinence. A survey of 3,000 patients in the government health centers showed that one out of four women married from five to nine years had been sterilized, and that the proportion was even higher among women married longer.

Since birth control is acceptable abroad, why do bishops oppose it as one way of coping with the population problem? Why do they even refuse to recommend the method sanctioned by the church? Whatever the reason may be, their only answer to the problem is migration and economic development. Here, curiously enough, they align themselves with the Soviet view, quoting with approval a Soviet claim that economic expansion is the one possible solution to rapid population growth. (This is consistent with the fact that in the United Nations Population Commission the representatives of countries dominated by the Catholic clergy have repeatedly sided with the Soviet and Ukrainian delegates.) The only form of economic development the bishops allude to, however, is agricultural, the implication being that if the food supply is adequate there can be no reason to reduce the birth rate.

This "food supply" idea is inadequate on two counts. First of all, the people in agrarian countries are demanding not only enough to eat, but more education, health, and recreation, and to get these they need more wealth *above* subsistence, not more *for* subsistence. Secondly, the "food supply" view is inconsistent with the necessary conditions of economic expansion itself. The bishops, subsequently echoed by Pope John, speak of the "thus far hidden reservoirs of science . . . . in this era of marvels." But scientific technology is not advanced by people who are reproducing up to the point where everyone barely has enough to live on. Technological development requires the support of costly research, the accumulation of capital for basic long-run undertakings, and above all the mass acquisition of knowledge and skills—none of which is possible under subsistence conditions.

It is a recognition of such facts that leads advisory groups on foreign aid to believe that a slackening of rapid population growth would facilitate economic development in "backward" countries. This belief does not ignore economic development, as the bishops charge, but regards it as the major goal; nor does it assume, as the bishops do, that an inherent antagonism exists between family planning and economic development. Moreover, in arguing that family planning is economically advantageous, social scientists do not claim that reducing the rate of population growth will automatically produce economic development. No one proposes birth control as a substitute for economic measures, and to many people it seems equally absurd to propose the latter as a substitute for the former.

The bishops, then, are not alone in respecting the potentialities of science. Others show perhaps an even deeper respect, for they acknowledge that science can not only create material wealth but can also control excessive population growth and provide for the healthful spacing of births. Efficient means of family planning already exist, and better ones can be discovered with more research. And in those countries where free inquiry is permitted, social scientists

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are rapidly developing the knowledge necessary for understanding how the dynamics of population relate to social and economic change. (In their recent study of how population growth affects economic development, for example, the economists Ansley J. Coale and Edgar M. Hoover find that per capita income in India and Mexico will be approximately 40 per cent higher by 1986 if the present birth rate can be appreciably reduced.)

The current debate in the United States over birth control is more important for this country than for the people of Japan, India, and many other "backward" lands, who will doubtless pursue their population programs whether we help or oppose them. Here at home, however, the birth control issue could join with others in tending to divide the country into two distinct religious communities, each marrying, going to school, and thinking within its own self-contained circle. Fortunately, judging from the evidence of an unrecognized but substantial consensus on modern family planning among Americans, this is not likely to happen. And it will certainly not happen if Catholic laymen continue to form their own opinions and restrain the clergy from seeking to force church doctrine into law and public policy—at the same time that other American religious groups do likewise.

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ISAAC BASHEVIS SINGER

One who came back

A Story

■ You may not believe it but there are people in the world who were called back. I myself knew such a one, in our town of Turbin, a rich man. He was taken with a mortal illness, the doctors said a lump of fat had formed under his heart, God forbid it should happen to any of us. He made a journey to the hot springs, to draw off the fat, but it didn't help. His name was Alter, and his wife's name was Shifra Leah; I can see them both, as if they were standing right before my eyes.

She was lean as a stick, all skin and bones, and black as a spade; he was short and fair, with a round paunch and a small round beard. A rich man's wife, but she wore a pair of broken-down clodhoppers and a shawl thrown over her head, and was forever looking out for bargains. When she heard of a village where one could pick up cheap a measure of corn or a pot of buckwheat, she would go all the way on foot and haggle there with the peasant until he let her have it for next to nothing. I beg her pardon—but the family she came from was scum. He was a lumber merchant, a partner in the sawmill; half the town bought their lumber from him. Not like his wife, he was fond of good living, dressing like a count, always in a shortcoat and fine leather boots. You could count each hair in his beard, so combed and brushed was it.

How he loved to eat! His old woman stinted on everything for herself—but for him no delicacy was too dear. Because he favored rich broths, with circlets of fat floating on top, she bullied the butcher, demanding fat meat, with a marrow bone thrown in, for her husband's broth with the gold coins in it, as she explained. In my time, when people got married they loved each other; who ever thought of divorce? But this Shifra Leah was so wrapped up in her Alter that people laughed in their fists. My husband this, and my husband that; heaven and earth and Alter. They had no children, and it's well known that when a woman is childless she turns all her love on her husband. The doctor said he was to blame, but who can know about such things?

Well, to make the story short. The man took sick and it looked bad. The biggest doctors came to see him—it didn't help; he lay in bed and sank from day to day. He still ate well, she feeding him roast pigeons and marzipans and all sorts of other delicacies, but his strength was ebbing away. One day I came to bring him a prayer book that my father—rest in peace—had sent over to him. There he lay on the sofa in a green dressing gown and white socks, a handsome figure. He looked healthy, except that his paunch was blown up like a drum, and when he spoke he puffed and he panted. He

A collection of ISAAC BASHEVIS SINGER'S stories, *Gimpel the Fool and Other Stories,* is available in English translation, as are two of his novels, *The Family Moskat* and *Satan in Goray.* A third novel, *The Magician of Lublin,* is scheduled for spring publication by the Noonday Press. "One Who Came Back" was translated from the Yiddish by Mirra Ginsburg.

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took the prayer book from me, and gave me a cookie together with a pinch on the cheek.

A DAY or two later the news was that Alter was dying. The menfolk gathered; the burial society waited at the door. Well, listen to what happened. When she saw that Alter was at his final gasp, Shifra Leah ran for the doctor. But by the time she got back with the doctor in tow, there was Leizer Godl, the elder of the burial society, holding a feather to her Alter's nostrils. It was all over, they were ready to lift him off the bed, as the custom is. The instant Shifra Leah took it in, she flew into a frenzy; God help us, her screaming and wailing could be heard at the edge of town. "Beasts, murderers, thugs! Out of my house! He'll live! He'll live!" She seized a broom and began to lay about her—everybody thought she had gone out of her mind. She knelt by the corpse: "Don't leave me! Take me with you!" and ranting and raving she shook and jostled him with such loud lamentations as you don't hear even on Yom Kippur.

You know you are not allowed to shake a corpse, and they tried to restrain her, but she threw herself prone on the dead man and screeched into his ear: "Alter, wake up! Alter! Alter!" A living man couldn't have stood it—his eardrums would have burst. They were just making a move to try and pull her away when suddenly the corpse stirred and let out a deep sigh. She had called him back. You should know that when a person dies his soul does not go up to heaven at once. It flutters at the nostrils and longs to enter the body again, it's so used to being there. If someone screams and carries on, it may take fright and fly back in, but it seldom remains long, because it cannot stay inside a body ruined by disease. Once in a great while, however, it does stay, and when that happens, you have a person who was called back.

Oh, it's forbidden. When the time comes for a man to die, he should die. Besides, one who has been called back is not like other men. He wanders about, as the saying goes, between worlds; he is here, and yet he isn't here; he would be better off in the grave. Still, the man breathes and eats. He can even live with his wife. Only one thing, he casts no shadow. They say there was a man once in Lublin who had been called back. He sat all day in the prayer house and never said a word, for twelve years; he did not even recite the Psalms. When he died at last, all that was left of him was a sack of bones, because he had been rotting all those years, his flesh had turned to dust. Not much was left to bury.

Alter's case was different. He immediately began to recover, talking and wisecracking as if nothing had happened. His belly shrank, and the doctor declared that the fat was gone from his heart. All Turbin was agog, people coming from other towns even to get a look at him. There was muttering that the burial society put living men into the ground; for if it was possible to call Alter back, then why not others? Perhaps others were also merely cataleptic?

Shifra Leah soon drove everyone away, she allowed no one to enter her house, not even the doctor. She kept the door locked and the curtains drawn, while she tended and watched over her Alter. A neighbor reported he was already sitting up, taking food and drink, and even looking into his account books.

Well, my dear people, it wasn't a month before he showed up at the market place, with his cane and his pampered beard and his shiny boots. Folks greeted him, gathering round and wishing him health, and he answered, "So you thought you were rid of me, eh? Not so soon! Plenty of water will yet run under the bridge before I go." People asked: "What did you do after you stopped breathing?" And he said: "I ate of the Leviathan and dipped it in mustard." He was always ready with the usual wisecrack. It was said that the Rabbi summoned him and they were locked up together in the judgment chamber. But no one ever knew what talk passed between them.

Anyhow, it was Alter, only now he had

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a nickname: the One Who was Called Back. He was back to his trading in boards and logs. The gravediggers' brethren went about with long faces; they had had hopes of picking up a juicy bone at the funeral. At first people were a bit afraid of him. But what was there to be afraid of? He was the same merchant. His illness had cost quite a sum, but he had enough left over. On Saturdays he came to prayer, he was called to the reading, offered thanksgiving. He was also expected to contribute to the poorhouse and to give a feast for the townsfolk, but Alter played dumb. As for his wife Shifra Leah, she strutted like a peacock, looking down her nose at everyone. A small matter?—she had brought a dead man back to life! Ours was quite a big town. Other men fell ill and other wives tried to call them back, but no one had a mouth like hers. If everybody could be recalled, the Angel of Death would have to put aside his sword.

WELL, things took a turn. Alter had a partner in his mill, Falik Weingarten; in those days people were not called by their family names, but Falik was a real aristocrat. One day Falik came to the Rabbi with a queer story: Alter, his partner, had become a swindler. He stole money from the partnership, he pulled all sorts of tricks and was trying to push him, Falik, out of the business. The Rabbi couldn't believe it: when a man had gone through such an ordeal, would he suddenly become a crook? It didn't stand to reason. But Falik was not one to make up tales, and they sent for Alter. He went into a song and dance—black was white, and white was black. He dug up ancient bills and accounts all the way back from King Sobieski's time. He showed bundles of claims. To hear him tell it, his partner still owed *him* a small fortune, and what's more, he threatened to start court action.

The townspeople tried arguing with Alter: "You've done business together for so many years, what's gone wrong all of a sudden?" But Alter was a changed man—he seemed to want only to quarrel. He started litigation, and the case dragged on and cost a fortune. Falik took it so to heart that he died. Who won, I don't remember, I only remember that the sawmill went over to creditors, and Falik's widow was left penniless. The Rabbi rebuked Alter: "Is this how you thank the Lord for putting you back on your feet and raising you from the dead?" Alter's answer was no better than the barking of a dog: "It was not God who did it. It was Shifra Leah." And he said further: "There is no other world. I was good and dead, and I can tell you there is nothing—no hell and no paradise." The Rabbi decided he had lost his mind—perhaps so. But wait, hear the rest.

His wife, Shifra Leah, was the worst kind of draggletail—people said that a pile of dirt sprang up wherever she stood still. Suddenly Alter began to demand that she should dress up, deck herself out. "A wife's place," he said, "is not only under the quilt. I want you to go promenading with me on Lublin Street." The whole town buzzed. Shifra Leah ordered a new cotton dress made, and on Sabbath afternoon, after the *cholent* meal, there were Alter and his wife Shifra Leah on the promenade, along with the tailors' helpers and shoemakers' apprentices. It was a sight—whoever had the use of his limbs ran out to look.

Alter even trimmed his beard. He became —what's it called? an atheist. Nowadays, they're all over the place; every fool puts on a short jacket and shaves his chin. But in my time we had only one atheist—the apothecary. People began to say that when Shifra Leah called Alter back with her screams, the soul of a stranger had entered his body. Souls come flying when someone dies, souls of kinsfolk and others, and, who knows, evil souls too, ready to take possession. Reb Arieh Vishnitzer, a pupil of the old Rabbi, declared that Alter was no longer Alter. True, it was not the same Alter. He talked differently, he laughed differently, he looked at you differently. His eyes were like a hawk's, and when he gazed at a woman, it was enough to make a shudder pass through you.

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He hung out with the musicians and all sorts of riffraff. At first his wife said amen to everything, whatever Alter said or did was all right with her. I beg her pardon, but she was a cow. But then a certain female arrived in our town, from Warsaw. She came to visit her sister, who wasn't much to boast of herself and whose husband was a barber; on market days he shaved the peasants, and he also bled them. You can expect anything from such people: he had a cage full of birds, twittering all day long, and he also had a dog. His own wife had never shaved off her hair, and the sister from Warsaw was a divorcee—no one knew who her husband was. She came among us bedecked and bejeweled, but who ever looked at her twice? A broomstick can be dressed up too. She showed the women the long stockings she was wearing, hooked, if you'll pardon the word, to her drawers. It was not hard to guess that she had come to trap some man. And who do you think fell into her clutches? Alter. When the townsfolk heard that Alter was running around with the barber's sister-in-law, they couldn't believe it; even coopers and skinners, in those days, had some regard for decency. But Alter was a changed man. God forbid, he had lost all shame. He strolled with the divorcee in the market place, and people looked from all the windows, shaking their heads and spitting in disgust. He went with her to the tavern, for all the world like a peasant with his woman. There they sat, in the middle of the week, guzzling wine.

When Shifra Leah heard it, she knew she was in trouble. She came running to the tavern, but her husband turned on her with the vilest abuse. The newcomer, the slut, also jeered at her and and taunted her. Shifra Leah tried to appeal to him: "Have you no shame before the world?" "The world can kiss what we sit on," says he. Shifra Leah cried to the other one: "He is my husband!" "Mine, also," answers she. The tavern keeper tried to put a word in, but Alter and the slut belabored him too; a woman depraved is worse than the worst man. She opened such a mouth that she shocked even the tavern keeper. People said she grabbed up a pitcher and threw it at him. Turbin is not Warsaw. The town was in an uproar. The Rabbi sent the sexton to summon Alter to him, but Alter refused to come. Then the community threatened him with the three letters of excommunication. It didn't help, he had connections with the authorities and defied one and all.

After a couple of weeks, the divorced slut left town, and people thought things would quiet down. Before the week was out, the man who was called back from the dead came to his wife with a tale. He had an opportunity, he said, to buy a wood in Wolhynia, an unusual bargain, and he must leave at once. He collected all his money, and told Shifra Leah that he had to pawn her jewelry too. He bought a barouche and two horses. People suspected he was up to something crooked and warned his wife, but the faith she had in him, he could have been a wonder rabbi. She packed his suits and underwear, roasted chickens and prepared jams for him for the journey. Just before he set off he handed her a small box: "In here," he said, "are three promissory notes. On Thursday, eight days from today, take the notes to the Rabbi. The money was left with him." He spun her a story, and she swallowed it. Then he was off.

Thursday, eight days later, she opened the box and discovered a writ of divorce. She let out a scream and fell into a faint. When she came to, she ran to the Rabbi, but he took one look at the paper and said: "There is nothing to be done. A writ of divorce can be hung on your doorknob, or it can be slipped under your door." You can imagine what went on in Turbin that day. Shifra Leah pulled at her cheeks, screaming: "Why didn't I let him croak? May he drop dead wherever he is!" He had cleaned her out—even her holiday kerchief was gone. The house was there still, but it was mortgaged to the barber. In olden times, runners would have been sent after such a shameless betrayer. The Jews once had power and authority, and there was a pil-

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lory in the synagogue court, to which such a wretch would have been bound. But among our Gentile officials a Jew was of small consequence—they couldn't care less. Besides, Alter had taken care to bribe his way.

Well, Shifra Leah took sick, climbed into her bed and refused to get up. She would take nothing to eat, and kept cursing him with the deadliest curses. Then suddenly she started beating her breast and lamenting: "It's all my fault. I did not do enough to please him." She wept and she laughed—she was like one possessed by an evil spirit. The one who claimed now to be the legal owner of the house, the barber, wanted to throw her out of her home, but the community wouldn't let him, and she remained, in a room in the attic.

In time, after a few weeks, she recovered, and she went out with a peddler's pack, like a man, to trade among the peasants. She turned out to be a good hand at buying and selling; soon the matchmakers were approaching her with proposals of marriage. She wouldn't hear of it; all she talked about, she bent your ear if you would listen, was her Alter. "You wait," she said, "he'll come back to me. The other one didn't want him, she was after his money. She'll clean him out and leave him flat." "And you'd take such riffraff back again?" folks asked her, to which she answered: "Only let him come. I'll wash his feet and drink the water." She still had a trunk left and she collected linens and woolens, like a bride. "This will be my dowry for when he returns," she boasted. "I'll marry him again." Nowadays you call it infatuation; we called it plumb crazy.

Whenever people came from the big cities, she ran to them: "Have you run into my Alter?" But no one had seen him; it was rumored that he had become an apostate. Some said he had married a she-demon. Such things happen. The years went by, and people began to think that Alter would never be heard of again.

One Sabbath afternoon, when Shifra Leah was dozing on her bench-bed (she had never learned to read the Holy Book, as the women do) the door opened and in stepped a soldier. He took out a sheet of paper. "Are you Shifra Leah, the wife of the scoundrel Alter?" She turned white as chalk; she could not understand Russian, and an interpreter was brought in. Well, Alter was in prison, a serious crime, because he was sentenced to life. He was being kept in the Lublin jail, and he had managed to bribe the soldier, who was going home on leave, to bring a letter to Shifra Leah. Who knows where Alter got the money to bribe in prison? He must have hidden it somewhere in his cot when he was first brought in. Those who read the letter said that it could have melted a stone; he wrote to his former wife: "Shifra Leah, I have sinned against you. Save me! Save me! I am going under. Death is better than such a life." The other one, the slut, the barber's sister-in-law, had stripped him of everything and left him in his shirt. She probably informed on him too.

The town buzzed with excitement. But what could anyone do to help him?—you may be sure he was not put away for reading the Holy Book. But Shifra Leah runs to all the important people in town. "It is not his fault," she cries, "it comes from his sickness." She was not yet sobered up, the old cow. People asked her: "What do you need that lecher for?" She would not allow a speck to fall on his name. She sold everything, even her Passover dishes; she borrowed money, she got what she could from high and low. Then she took herself off to Lublin, and there she must have turned heaven and earth, for she finally got him freed from jail.

Back she comes to Turbin with him, and young and old ran out to meet them. When he stepped out from the covered wagon, you couldn't recognize him: without a beard, only a thick mustache, and he had on a short caftan and high boots. It was a *goy*, not Alter. On looking closer, you saw that it was Alter after all: the same walk, the same swagger. He called each man by his name and asked about all kinds of

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detail. He made wisecracks and said things to make the women blush. They asked him: "Where's your beard?" Cracks he: "I pawned it with a moneylender." They asked him: "How does a Jew take up such ways?" He answers: "Are you any better? Everybody is a thief." On the spot he gave a recital of everybody's secret sins. It was plain to see that he was in the hands of the Evil One.

Shifra Leah tried to make excuses for him and to restrain him; she fluttered over him like a mother hen. She forgot that they were divorced and wanted to take him home, but the Rabbi sent word that they must not live under the same roof; it was even wrong for her, he said, to have traveled with him in the same wagon. Scoff at Jewishness, Alter, but the law still stands; the women took a hand. The pair were separated for twelve days, while she took the prescribed ablutions, and then they were led under the wedding canopy. A bride must go to the ritual bath even if she is taking back her own husband.

A week after the wedding he started thieving. On market days he was among the carts, picking pockets. He went off to the villages to steal horses. He was no longer plump, but lean as a hound. He clambered over roofs, forced locks, broke open stable doors. He was strong as iron and nimble as a devil. The peasants got together and posted a watch with dogs and lanterns. Shifra Leah was ashamed to show her face and kept her window shuttered; imagine what must have gone on between man and wife. Soon Alter became the leader of a band of roughnecks. He guzzled at the tavern with them, and they sang a Polish song in his honor; I remember the words to this day: "Our Alter is a decent sort, he hands out beer by the quart."

There is a saying: a thief will end up on the gallows.

One day, as Alter was drinking with his toughs, a squadron of Cossacks came riding up to the tavern with drawn swords. Orders had come from the governor to throw him into irons and bring him to the jail. Alter saw at once that this was the bitter end, and he grabbed a knife; his drinking pals ran off—they left him to fight it out alone. The tavernkeeper said afterwards that he fought with the strength of a demon, chopping away at the Cossacks as though they were a field of cabbages. He turned over tables and threw barrels at them; he was no longer a young man, but for a while it almost looked as though he might get the better of them all. Still, as the saying goes, one is none. The Cossacks slashed and hacked at him till there was no more blood left in his veins. Someone brought the bad news to Shifra Leah, and she came running like crazy to his side. There he lay, and she wanted to call him back again, but he said one word to her: "Enough!" Shifra Leah fell silent. The Jews ransomed his body from the officials.

I didn't see him dead. But those who did swore that he looked like an old corpse that had been dug up from the grave. Pieces were dropping from his body. The face could not be recognized, it was a shapeless pulp. It was said that when he was being cleansed for burial, an arm came off, and then a foot; I wasn't there, but why should people lie? Men who are called back rot while they are alive. He was buried in a sack outside the graveyard fence, at midnight. After his death, an epidemic struck our town, and many innocent children died. Shifra Leah, that deluded woman, put up a stone for him and went to visit his grave. What I mean to say is—it is not proper to recall the dying. If she had let him go at his appointed hour, he would have left behind a good name. And who knows how many men who were called back are out in the world today? All our misfortunes come from them.

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F. W. DUPEE

The American Norman Mailer

■ Some future literary historian will doubtless be able to name the precise moment at which the big change in American literature occurred, and to give the reasons why it occurred at all. When, and from what combination of causes, did ambitious young men cease trying to write the Great American Novel and set about trying to *re*-write the Great American Novel? To the 20's generation, *The Scarlet Letter, Moby Dick, Walden,* James's novels, *The Red Badge of Courage* were all inspirations of one or another kind and degree of intensity. By what historical process did the same works and writers become what they so often are to writers today: sacred ancestral presences, established rituals to be gone through again and again, challenges to greatness, often veritable models?

The tendency began, I suspect, among certain surviving members of the 20's generation itself—writers who had lived to see the closing of European horizons by fascism and war, to be affected at home by the nostalgic spirit of *The Flowering of New England* and the vast body of criticism and scholarship stemming from it. Faulkner was perhaps the chief of these. In "The Old Man" and "The Bear" such ancestral themes as the big hunt, the open boat, the River God, the primitive initiation assumed a ritualistic air, although there was enough of the original Faulkner in those tales to make them masterpieces of a kind. Similarly with Hemingway's belated contribution to the same tendency, *The Old Man and the Sea,* of which a French critic has observed that it is *"classique, trop classique,"* while maintaining, as I do, that the story has enough of the *"vrai* Hemingway" in it to keep it alive. Indeed, such narratives represented a genuine mutation in the works of Faulkner and Hemingway, and they have become, in turn, an influence on the younger writers.

Norman Mailer is among the more intrepid and protean of these younger writers. He would not be caught dead, I imagine, in the act of venerating the past or anything else. By his own testimony, the contemporary he most admires and envies is not "the most perfect writer" among them, namely Truman Capote; nor is it Gore Vidal, who has the best "formal mind" and most highly developed critical capacities. It is that rank original, who conceivably has never read a classic, James Jones. In fact the book in which Mailer offers these and other evaluations, many of them less generous, of his contemporaries, is rank with his own passion for new experience and his ambition to write the great novel of the future. A big unruly book, bearing a title that stuffs the mouth with consonants, and containing materials that in their variety defy definition, *Advertisements for Myself* (Putnam, 532 pp., $5.00) is partly an anthology of Mailer's shorter writings (though with specimens of

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some of his novels), partly a series of commentaries on them and his career in general.

As his career so far has been somewhat spotty, and he knows it, the book is rich in evidence bearing on his disappointments. There is blame for the several publishers who, out of prudery or prejudice, refused to accept the moderately daring *The Deer Park;* for the reviewers who, when the book was finally brought out, failed to appreciate its merits, as other reviewers had slighted *Barbary Shore,* his earlier novel; for the public whose taste has been corrupted by prosperity, television, and other recent phenomena. There is also blame, candid and often penetrating, for Mailer's own part in the process: his sometimes aimless malingering; his giving of himself on occasion to large febrile projects which came to nothing; his repeated misjudgments of people, situations, and his own abilities. *Advertisements for Myself* is chaotic; its tone is uncertainly pitched between defiance and apology. So much is this the case that anyone can easily lay hands on its jugular, and many reviewers have done so and thought they severed it. But the condition of Norman Mailer's life and art is that his jugular remains exposed. With all its faults in view, *Advertisements for Myself* is a confessional document of considerable interest and an engrossing chronicle of the postwar literary life. It is also an extremely funny book, for Mailer's gifts as a humorist are among his most reliable gifts. The one thing that his candor and wit leave unmolested is his own heavy dependence on the literary past, on *what has been done.*

He once embarked, he tells us, on "an enormous eight-part novel" and still proposes to complete it in some fashion and at some length—"Will it be a thousand pages?" he asks himself. This projected work he describes as "a descendant of *Moby Dick.*" But is American literature so familial an affair that a novelist must conceive of his books in this genealogical way? Professions of piety apart, how is the projected novel really related to Melville's novel? Mailer remarks that *The Deer Park* was an outgrowth of his original project for a novel in eight parts—a black sheep of the white whale family, perhaps. Yet neither *The Deer Park* nor the fragments of the original project included in *Advertisements* shows any connection whatever with *Moby Dick* except one which seems to me unfortunate. "Call me Ishmael," *Moby Dick* begins, as no one needs to be reminded. And Mailer's "The Man Who Studied Yoga," which he says was to have served as "prologue to the early scheme," begins: "I would introduce myself if it were not useless. The name I had last night will not be the same as the name I have tonight. For the moment, then, let me say that I am thinking of Sam Slovoda."

This seems to me one of those conscious echoes which merely succeed in being wordier and shriller than the original. For the rest, the attraction of *Moby Dick* to Mailer, as a writer of future novels, seems to consist largely in its bulk, profundity, and prestige. It is to him, I should imagine, an image of literary power rather than a work to be admired, learned from perhaps, and then returned to its place of honor. And to judge by *Advertisements,* the literary past is all the weightier for him because it includes the achievements of Hemingway, Faulkner, Dos Passos, Fitzgerald, and others of their vintage, all of them together representing to him a massed accumulation of potency. How did he come to write his first published book, *The Naked and the Dead,* a novel of army life in the late war? ". . . I may as well confess I had gone into the army with the idea that when I came out I would write the war novel of World War II." With this idea in mind he did serve in the army (proudly, as a rifleman) and he did produce, punctually, efficiently, and as if on demand, *The Naked and the Dead.* But what an idea, and what a phrase, "the war novel of World War II"! *The* war novel? To be sure, Hemingway, Dos Passos, and others of their time had used their varied experiences of World War I in the writing of a lot of enormously varied books. Not they, but later

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journalists and sociologists, lumped those books together in the misleading, the unreal, category of "war novels." And when the second war arrived, the same crowd created that demand for "the novel of World War II" which Mailer determined to meet.

ADVERTISEMENTS FOR MYSELF testifies to his constant preoccupation with those 20's writers, in their capacity not merely as war novelists but as symbols of literary prestige in general. Hemingway represents a special example and challenge to Mailer throughout *Advertisements*. He tells one story which, trivial as it looks, is actually significant of his relation to the muscular master. He once mailed to Hemingway, personally a stranger to him, an unsolicited copy of *The Deer Park* and presently got the package back from Havana unopened. As it happened, he was not too sorry to have the book returned, for he had written in it certain words which he now regretted. After some manful sparring in Hemingway's own vein, he had said that he was "deeply curious" to learn Hemingway's reaction to the book. That "deeply curious" had come to seem to him a false note.

Now, Mailer admits that the Cuban postal system, rather than Hemingway, may inadvertently have administered the seeming snub. Yet he includes the episode in *Advertisements*. And one can readily see why he does, just as one can see the point of other apparent irrelevancies and absurdities memorialized in the same volume; these contribute much to its truth and humor. The significance was that the Hemingway whom Mailer addressed was the wrong Hemingway. He was not the young Ernest who conscientiously created the Hemingway art and who, if he had survived, might have shown interest in a young artist like Norman Mailer. The Hemingway he addressed was the swaggering Papa of the later legend, who naturally wouldn't "know" Mailer.

No Olympians can ever have looked more Olympian to an outsider than Hemingway and the others have looked to Mailer. Faulkner, he tells us, recognized his existence only by ridiculing his extravagant claims for Negro sexuality. And Mailer, coming of literary age in the 40's when the older writers were already established, already moneyed, be-prized, widely translated and imitated, acquired a mixed feeling for them. His genuine appreciation of their work was laced with a strong sense of their material stature —their reputation, influence, position in the literary market place. One sees, too, that his disposition to regard them, and the literary past in general, in this light, arose not only from the fact of his coming of age at this formidable phase of their careers. He also came of age at a moment of rapidly growing prosperity and expanding culture in America, when similar rewards seemed to be within reach of himself and other aspiring young writers.

Hence, probably, the dreams of worldly power which, in the pages of *Advertisements,* give unmistakable signs of being conjoined to his legitimate literary ambitions. Unmistakable? He has been "running for President for years," he says, and applies the same phrase to James Jones. Such truculent admissions are evidently supposed to induce in the reader a state of amused shock. To me they represent a rather depressing confusion of purposes. Why, with a thousand-page novel to finish, does anyone *want* to be President, unless he fears that he will never finish the novel?

In his three novels to date, as in *Advertisements for Myself,* Mailer is often a formidably good writer. He also gives, beneath the bluster of *Advertisements,* an appealing account of himself as a person. Scattered throughout that book are wry tales of the predicaments in which he has landed while trying to sustain the life of a free spirit in an unfavorable age. No doubt he sees himself, in Norman Podhoretz's phrase, as "a battleground of history." *Advertisements* may, as Alfred Kazin affirms, resemble Fitzgerald's *The Crackup* in showing "how exciting, yet tragic, America can be for a gifted writer." But Mailer's battleground has at least these resemblances to a city playground: it is strenuous, competitive, gang-

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conscious, cruel, sporting, amusing. And though America is unquestionably exciting to Mailer, it is wonderful how little he ever allows it to become tragic. Indeed, his response to the excitement of it is intense enough to preclude his feeling "deeply" any tragedy in it. One of the advantages of *Advertisements* over his novels is that the sense of excitement and the laughter get full play here, unembarrassed by any need to write, or rewrite, the Great American Novel. America represents wonderful sport and adventure to Mailer; and they get better as America itself seems to him to grow more corrupt and menacing. Tom Sawyer scarcely relishes his grim games of life and death more thoroughly than Mailer does his experiences as soldier, revolutionary, Hipster, junkie, and associate of pimps and call-girls. And like a far more mature and engaging Tom Sawyer, he relishes "evil" in proportion as he himself is incorrigibly moral.

Or, at least, in proportion as he is preoccupied with "morale," a slightly different matter, I admit. In his well-known and brilliant essay "The White Negro" he formulates the cult and discipline of the Hipster, a charming but probably doomed phenomenon of recent years. He quite possibly *over*-formulates Hip, schematizes it, makes its ways and words merely antithetical to those of its enemy the Square, reduces it to a kind of cross between a game and a form of hygiene. Hip makes for a livelier vocabulary, a more stylish way of carrying oneself, more and better orgasms. Thanks to Hip, a bi-sexual Negro Mailer knows gets as much of a charge out of a certain chick as out of a battalion of Marines. *There's* a testimonial to Hip as conducing to fair play and a well-rounded life. Hip is *good for you.*

SOMETHING of this same two-way attitude toward experience seems to me to enter into Mailer's novels, helping to account for both their virtues and their shortcomings. On one of his sides he rejoices in that "appetite for life" which he admires in James Jones. Sheer experience, experience for its own sake, leads him on. And just as this makes him a comparative rarity among younger writers today, so it constitutes his living relation to the older American writers—his living one, that is, as distinguished from the relation by way of familial piety and emulation. But on another side he has an equal hunger for ideas, a hunger that is not so well satisfied by what he can produce in the way of intellectual nourishment. The various forms of enlightenment which the older writers brought to bear on their experience seem to have crystallized, for Mailer, into a vague, self-conscious sort of wisdom. This has sought to express itself in appropriate ideas, Marxist or Nietzschean (Hip has Nietzschean roots, as Norman Podhoretz implies) or Freudian. Of these the Freudian is Mailer's most pervasive source of ideas and images. It is astonishing how often in his novels an authoritative older person is engaged in trying to assist some younger, more amorphous person to maturity (Eitel, the movie director of *The Deer Park,* is eager to help his mistress "grow up," and Marion Faye, the glorified pimp of the same book, has a similar relation to his call-girls and junkie acquaintances.) But the Freudian ideas, like those of other derivation, often operate not to reinforce and clarify his experience but to embarrass and devitalize it. The author himself seems frequently to approach his material as the learner, the disciple, the patient, eager to grow up.

The result in his novels is, as I say, a sort of tug of war between his passion for experience and his felt need of enlightening ideas. And it is in *The Deer Park,* that survivor of what was to be his eight-part colossus, that Mailer's contradictions reach their maximum intensity. When Alfred Kazin calls *The Deer Park* a "somehow sick book," "peculiarly airless and closed," I feel obliged to assent even while rebelling against the J. Donald Adams-like adjectives. (*The Deer Park* brings out the old Adams in us all.) For this novel about the sex life, the political, social, and business problems of Hollywood personages gathered in a resort resembling (I gather) Palm Springs, is frequently paralyzed by its opposing intentions.

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The manners prevailing in this unpleasant pleasure resort are superbly observed. The conversation of Hollywood magnates is admirably comic. The routines of the call-girls form a weird dance-like pattern within the slowly moving narrative. In the rendering of such things Mailer's passion for experience is matched by his expert knowledge of what he writes about. How does it happen, then, that this panorama of iniquity is constantly threatening to turn into a waxworks display? For one thing, Mailer's trio of heroes, Eitel, Faye, and O'Shaugnessy, are too sententious and loquacious and self-conscious. In their frequent colloquies they constitute a sort of committee interminably "chewing on" (in committee jargon) the agenda of the day. And with much help from the author, by way of his often intrusive comments on the action, they just about chew the hell out of it. Literally, they all but convert the experience of modern corruption into something inert, dry, and abstract. Here is an encounter between Marion Faye the super-pimp and a young Mexican delinquent:

> Marion had not seen him in a long time. Paco had been picked up in a robbery and had lived a term in state prison. The fact he dropped in like this after an absence of two years did not startle Faye. Such things were always happening to him.
>
> "I hear you're peddling gash," said Paco, "you got some gash for me?"
>
> It was weird. Paco was neurotic, Faye thought, a pimply dreamy kid, begging for dough. In his family his mother hounded Paco, he used to call her dirty names; in the clubhouse he would lie around for hours reading comic books; once he announced he wanted to go to the South Seas. Even at the age of seventeen, tears came into his eyes at a harsh word. And now he was a junkie, and he needed a fix. Sudden compassion for Paco burned Faye's eyelids. The poor slob of a *pachuco*.

As Faye is already well known to the reader at this nearly midway point of the novel, we do not need to be nudged by the author into realizing that he is unstartled, "such things were always happening to him." Nor does Faye's curiously psychiatric relation to the boy gain in convincingness by our being told flatly that "Paco was neurotic." (Surely an understatement!) Indeed Faye is not what he or Mailer thinks he is but a sentimentalist, with his (ouch!) "pimply dreamy kid" and his (OUCH!) eye-scalding "compassion."

In *Advertisements for Myself* there are many indications that Norman Mailer will pull out of his difficulties, which are in part the difficulties of other writers of his age and time. The achievements of the literary past inevitably acquire an excess of prestige by contrast with the present creative stalemate. And since the creative stalemate happens to coincide with a condition of unexampled economic prosperity, it is natural that writers should dream, not only of rewriting the American classics, but of running for President. With his essential humor, sanity, and (yes!) humility, Mailer seems to perceive much of this situation and to give promise of reconciling his appetite for life with his appetite for ideas. But a novel in perhaps a thousand pages? *Raintree County* approached that length, I believe, but *Moby Dick,* in my edition, runs to only 822.

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EDOUARD RODITI

A Sephardic Family

My great-grandmother, whose maiden name was Rebecca Yachni Belinfante, came of an ancient family, once famous for its learning and piety throughout the lands where the Torah is studied. It claimed descent from Tov Elem, a 12th-century rabbi of Limoges who had been given this name, meaning "the Good Child," by the Rashi, whose favorite and most promising pupil the boy had been. But the Good Child's progeny, scattered throughout Europe and the Near East by the persecutions of the past seven hundred years, had translated its Hebrew name into all the languages of the Gentile peoples in whose lands it had, at various times, been allowed to settle. In Spain, for instance, it had adopted the name of Belinfante; in France, that of Bonfils; in Italy, Bonfiglio; in Germany and Poland, Gutkind; later, in England and America, Goodchild or Fairchild.

The Spanish branch of Tov Elem's apparently numerous progeny suffered severely under the Inquisition, at first in Spain, then a few decades later in Portugal too. The great 19th-century liberal and anticlerical Portuguese historian Alexandro Herculano records, in his monumental *Historia da Inquisição no Portugal,* that a certain João de Belinfante, a Portuguese gentleman of Jewish origin, was discovered to be practicing in secret the religion of his forebears, which his family had abjured only superficially and under extreme pressure, a few decades earlier, at the time of the expulsion of the Jews from Portugal. João de Belinfante was tried and burned at the stake in an auto-da-fé, in the square now known in Lisbon as the Rossío, which no devout Jew will cross, even today, without reciting, at least under his breath, a *kaddish* for the martyrs who suffered there the supreme test.

Surviving members of this Spanish and Portuguese family managed to escape, some to Holland, others to Ancona, in the Papal States in Italy, others to the Ottoman Empire. As the centuries went by, these three branches of the Belinfante family experienced varying fortunes and drifted apart. In Amsterdam and The Hague, members of the Dutch branch prospered as printers, booksellers, scholars, artists, and professional men. A great printing press and publishing house that has existed over two hundred years still bears their name, while other Belinfantes are listed in Dutch dictionaries of national biography as distinguished lawyers, physicians, and musicians. One of the finest and oldest of European bookstores belongs, even today, to a Dutch Belinfante. At the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, I met a few years ago a Belinfante who was legal advisor to the Royal Netherlands government's delegation there. Ever since the Age of Enlightenment, the Dutch branch of this family seems indeed to have assumed responsibilities of leadership in the general

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movement of emancipation of Western European Jewry and to have specialized in lay learning and scholarship rather than in piety and sanctity. In the less emancipated communities of the Ottoman Empire, on the other hand, the Belinfantes continued to distinguish themselves, until quite recently, by their piety rather than by their science, whereas many of the Belinfantes of Ancona, a seaport on the Adriatic that saw its prosperity undermined by shifts of trade routes and by the invention of the steamship, hit a felicitous mean between these two extremes by choosing, since 1870, to be officers in the Italian navy.

WHEN my great-grandmother, Rebecca Yachni Belinfante, married Nissim D'Israeli Roditi in Istanbul just over a hundred years ago, their union was commemorated in an illuminated *ketoubah* or marriage contract designed according to the usages of Sephardic Jewry. Unlike the rare *ketouboth* of the Italian and Dutch Renaissance now treasured by a few museums, it was not drawn up on parchment but on paper, nor was it illuminated with figurative miniatures in color, similar to those of a Haggadah, but only with floral decorations modestly designed with color crayons. This decay in artistic traditions that yet remained faithful in spirit, if not in style and technique, to ancient originals, reflected the general decay of the intellectual and artistic life of the Sephardic Jews of the Ottoman Empire. My great-grandmother's family, though still respected in Istanbul for its glorious past, was moreover quite poor. But my great-grandfather acquired status by this union, being a descendant of the original Greek-speaking Romaniot Jewish communities of the former Byzantine Empire. As the name Roditi implies, our family came originally from the island of Rhodes, from which it had been expelled, as Jews, by the Crusading Knights of Saint John. It had then sought refuge in the dormant Jewries, mainly Karaitic, of Constantinople, Salonica, and the cities of northern Greece, which the wealthier or less Levantine Spanish Jewish aristocracy of Belinfantes, Benvenistes, Abravanels, Mendes Nassis, and Del Medigos had later roused from their torpor of many centuries, when they settled there after being driven from Spain and Portugal by a series of expulsions which began in 1495. Enjoying greater freedom under the Ottoman Empire or in the Venetian or Genoese concessions of its seaports, some of these Spanish or Romaniot families had, by the middle of the 19th century, achieved positions of great wealth and power.

In spite of its decay, the Constantinople branch of the Belinfante family still maintained, at the time of this union, a certain number of pious institutions or foundations in the immediate vicinity of the Ottoman capital. On the Asiatic shore of the Bosphorus, near Haydar Pasha where the railroad station was subsequently built for the line that runs as far as Cairo and Baghdad, a pious ancestor of my great-grandmother had established, for instance, a rest house for pilgrims who were on their way to the Holy Land or on their return from it; and it was there that the great Hasidic Rabbi Nachman, the disciple of the glorious Baal Shem, had stopped on his weary trek, when he had traveled on foot from Poland to Jerusalem.

In my great-grandmother's days, this rest house was no longer so sorely needed, nor so frequently used. Most pilgrims now traveled most of the way by ship or by mail coach, if not already by rail. The pilgrims who still availed themselves of the facilities of this home for transients were moreover mostly Polish or Russian, Ashkenazi Jews who were followers of Hasidic sects which revered Rabbi Nachman and stopped everywhere that the great saint had rested his head on his long pilgrimage.

Most of the Sephardic Jews of Constantinople, whether Spaniards or Romaniots, held these Ashkenazi pilgrims from Russia or Poland in little esteem, dismissing them all contemptuously as Litvaks, Lithuania being, in their eyes, a kind of mythical Hyperborean region that could produce only

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monsters whose barbarous jargon remained incomprehensible. My great-grandmother was constantly teased by her friends and her husband's family for her devotion to the Yiddish-speaking and increasingly rare pilgrims who stopped at her rest home on the Adriatic shore. Often, my great-grandfather, a wealthy man until he was ruined when the Turkish government after the Crimean War refused to repay what it had borrowed as war loans, would not be willing to give his wife all the money that she needed to cover the expenses of her rest home or to supply the needs of particularly sick or indigent pilgrims. On these occasions, my great-grandmother would leave her palatial home in Hasköy dressed in all her finery, as if she were about to pay a courtesy call on the Sultana Walideh, the mother of the reigning Sultan, from whom the land where the Roditi home was built had been rented. But instead of driving her to the Harem of the Palace, her carriage would take her to the landing stage in the harbor section of Galata, where she would hire a boat to take her across the Bosphorus to Haydar Pasha. There, she would first visit her rest house, to find out what the most urgent needs of its inmates might be. If clothes were needed for women or children among the pilgrims, she would undress and distribute to them, from beneath her finery, superfluous skirts and petticoats, even yard goods that she had concealed on her person.

If money were still needed, she would send the hired cab in which she had come from the landing stage on the Asiatic shore to fetch the pawnbroker from the near-by Jewish community of Kuskunjuk, where the ancient Jewish cemetery can still be visited on the hills from which one admires, across the waters that separate two continents, the skyline of Constantinople. He would come, with money in his purse, ready to meet all her requirements. She would then leave with him her personal jewels, mostly great rubies that we would despise today because of their many flaws and their somewhat primitive Oriental cut, but that represented, in those days, a considerable fortune. He would accept them as pledges and return them the next day, with her acknowledgements of indebtedness, to my great-grandfather, in the offices of his warehouses by the docks along the Galata shore of the Golden Horn.

I STILL have a photograph of my great-grandmother, a kind of daguerrotype representing a dignified lady dressed in stiff black silks, in a style of costume that was still worn, in those days, by the older women of the non-Moslem communities, whether Greek, Armenian, Jewish, or Levantine Catholic, who had not yet adopted such Western styles of dress as the crinoline. In her hand, she holds a jet rosary, a tassled Moslem *tespih* such as the amber one that I, American born though I may be, still carry at all times in my pocket as a concession to my "nervous" Near Eastern hands. On the back of her photograph, in an elaborate design of formalized Victorian foliage, the photographer advertises his name: *Abdallah Frères, photographes de Leurs Altesses Impériale et Royale, le Sultan et le Khédive, à Constantinople et au Caire.*

My great-grandfather respected his wife for the stubbornness with which she pursued, willy-nilly, her pious or charitable purposes. Fortunately, when he lost his money, the rest home on the Asiatic shore was but rarely visited by pilgrims, and the Jewish community of Istanbul was ready to assume whatever modest obligations it still imposed.

After my great-grandfather's relatively early death, his widow lived for many years as a respected matriarch in the home of one of her sons, my great-uncle who remained in Constantinople when my grandfather emigrated to France and then to America. On all family matters, she was still consulted, both locally and by letter, from Paris, Manchester, New York, or Boston. My uncle Victor, for instance, announced one day, at the age of twenty, that he was about to marry the sixteen-year-old daughter of an Algerian Jewish showman who was reputed to run a traveling circus, with muscle dancers and camels, in the Middle West of

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distant America. It was also said that he had made a fortune by showing the muscle dancer Little Egypt, whose success, at the Chicago Columbian World Fair, had so profoundly shocked Mrs. Potter Palmer and the feminist ladies of her committees that sought, in vain, to keep the whole show "clean." One thing was known for sure about my uncle's future father-in-law: that he operated side-shows at Coney Island. Later, he seems indeed to have been involved in the operating of a circus, for my uncle ran up debts, as his son-in-law, by purchasing in Hamburg, from Hagenbeck's famous circus and commercial zoo, a live camel. The unpaid bill for this unusual emigrant to America and its transportation over the watery wastes of the Atlantic Ocean finally reached my grandfather's offices in Paris. Be that all as it may, my father's family seems to have been truly shocked at the thought of becoming related to such oddly barbaric *mechutonim,* in-laws. Only my great-grandmother came up with favorable information about the prospective bride's family. These facts, obtained in short shrift through my great-grandmother's connections with former pilgrims and *rabbonim* in distant Algeria and Morocco, seem indeed to have been unknown even to the bride's family, which had become more disoriented than Westernized and attached more importance to the get-rich-quick schemes of cheap show business than to ancient traditions of learning and piety.

The bride, it appeared, was descended on her mother's side from the great Raab, Rabbi Ephraim Ainkaoua of Tlemcen, a saintly scholar of the 16th century who had reconciled the study of the Talmud with that of the Sefer Zohar by proposing Cabbalistic interpretations of legal commentary and legalistic interpretations of Cabbalist metaphor. At the Raab's tomb in Tlemcen, miracles are still said to occur annually, when it is visited by a motley crowd of pious Jews and liberally superstitious Moslems who forgather there for a few days from all over Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, even Libya and the oases of the Sahara. A few years ago, I visited this tomb and watched a group of Westernized young textile salesmen from the Rue de la Lyre in Algiers as they penetrated its sacred precincts barefooted but wearing skullcaps. They then lit candles that they placed on the grave with lumps of sugar, on which they poured water that they lapped up, together with the dissolved sugar and dust from the tombstone, as it trickled off the flat surface.

On her father's side, my aunt was moreover related to the great merchant Bakri, who had once supplied Napoleon's armies with Algerian grain, but had never been paid by successive French governments. Some decades after these grain deliveries, the Dey of Algiers had at long last lost his temper with the French Consul, while discussing repayment of this huge debt and of the accumulated interest. He had put an end to fruitless argument by striking the Consul with his fan, a diplomatic incident that led to the French conquest of Algeria, after which Bakri and his family had been paid with the privileges of French citizenship as a substitute for cash. Besides, it had been at the marriage of this same Bakri's daughter that the great Romantic painter Eugène Delacroix, a friend of the family during his stay in North Africa, had painted his famous sketch of "A Jewish Marriage" in Algiers. Could one want more *yichus?* My uncle Victor's marriage took place without further protest from his reluctant family, but proved to be an unhappy one because of my uncle's flighty character when, a few years later, he abandoned his young wife and two children, in Paris, to pursue new conquests.

But my grandmother, whose maiden name, Fanny (Theophano) Gallipoliti, proclaimed her Romaniot origins, had fully accepted her somewhat alien daughter-in-law and continued to see her regularly, making provision for her and her children, who never lacked the necessities of life. It was indeed my grandmother who, some thirty years later, once told me a

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strange tale about the therapeutic methods employed by my Algerian aunt when her son, my cousin, once fell seriously ill, as a child, in Paris.

The boy had first had a fever and complained of acute headaches, which had been diagnosed as meningitis. The French doctors who were handling the case seemed to be at a complete loss when the sick boy fell unconscious and remained several days in a comatose state. My aunt then dismissed them summarily and sent, in their stead, for an obscure Algerian rabbi who officiated for a very poor North African immigrant community in the narrow streets of the slum that spreads between Saint-Paul and the river. There, in a kind of *mellah,* the Jews of the Maghreb tended already to congregate, with kosher butchers of their own who sold mutton for *couscous* rather than beef for *tsimmes,* whereas the Polish, Russian, and Rumanian ghetto spread beyond Saint-Paul, in the streets to the right of the Boulevard Sebastopol as it leads from the embankment of the Seine towards the Boulevards.

To my aunt's relatively elegant apartment situated west of the Arc de Triomphe, this Algerian rabbi had brought a curiously dressed assistant who spoke practically no French, only a Judeo-Arabic or perhaps Judeo-Berber dialect of the kind that is spoken today only in the most distant communities of the M'zab, in southern Algeria, on the very confines of the Sahara, in the mysterious city of Ghardaia, for instance. The assistant moreover carried a *couffin,* one of those North African woven grass marketing baskets that have now become quite fashionable among Left Bank housewives who hanker after exotic samples of peasant arts and crafts. In this *couffin,* a live black cock lay, its feet tied together with a string, its beady eyes popping out of its head as it viewed its surroundings in apoplectic terror.

In the presence of the family, the rabbi and his assistant began to conduct a curious ceremony. At first, a brazier was set up in the sickroom; the two officiants chanted incomprehensible prayers and magic formulae as they cast in turn all sorts of spices and herbs on the red-hot coals. A thick and heavily perfumed smoke soon pervaded the room, all around the sick child who still lay moaning and unconscious on the bed. The rabbi then seized the black cock and approached the sickbed. In a jargon that was partly French and partly Judeo-Arabic, he called upon the Angel of Death to be patient for a while, assuring him that he would not be cheated of his prey; after which, he whispered to the boy that his name was henceforth "Le Coq," and to the bird that its name was henceforth Charles. The bird was then killed, with a single knife thrust that severed its jugular vein, allowing the blood to flow freely over the sick boy's head as the rabbi and his assistant led the whole family in the traditional weeping, wailing, gnashing of teeth, beating of breasts, tearing of hair and scratching of the flesh of the cheeks that accompany, among North African Jews, the death of a relative.

My aunt was instructed to allow the bird's blood to remain coagulated on the child's head for the next few days, and was warned not to address her son by any other name than "Le Coq" until he had fully recovered from his illness. In every other respect too, she must continue to behave, for a while, as if my cousin had actually died, neglecting none of the traditional usages that precede or follow a funeral.

Three days later, the boy came out of his coma, regaining his strength rapidly when the coagulated blood fell in crusts from his scalp. The Angel of Death had been fooled; he had taken the bird in the child's stead.

Would I be prepared to vouch for the truth of this anecdote, and of all its details? I can well remember my aunt, who died in New York, during the Second World War, in a Park Avenue hotel. She was a woman of rare beauty, with Titian-colored red hair and the dazzling complexion of all blondes from Southern climes. All of her relatives whom I have ever met, far from being at all swarthy or North

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African in their appearance, were light-complexioned and almost Nordic. Not realizing that their family name, Akoun, was a French spelling of a Judeo-Arabic variant of Ha-Cohen, they even claimed descent from some mythical Viking Haakon who might have landed, a thousand years ago, on the Barbary Coast. In addition, they were all very French in their habits of thought, some of them quite provincially French, like the majority of the *colons* or settlers of Algeria. Their forebears had indeed enjoyed full French citizenship ever since the conquest of Algeria, without having to wait for the Crémieux Law that granted this privilege, some fifty years later, to all other native Jews of the conquered territory. Still, it is quite conceivable that, in an emergency when French medical science had failed her, my aunt, in her despair, should have reverted to North African magical practices that could do no harm.

Another circumstance leads me to believe this tale. The Sephardi Jews of the shores of the Mediterranean, however proud their bearing when they wish to save face in public, can be self-destructively frank when they discuss their own foibles among themselves. Nearly every odd or compromisingly un-Occidental incident of family history that my grandmother ever recounted to me has turned out to be true. In this respect, an anecdote about my grandfather's family is very revealing.

In the 18th century, a Venetian Jewish family named Camondo had amassed a legendary fortune in Constantinople as bankers of the Sultans. Later, they obtained in Italy a title, and Count Isaac de Camondo is now remembered in art history as the first great European patron of the French Impressionist painters; in the Hollywood *Moulin Rouge* version of the life of Toulouse-Lautrec, Isaac de Camondo was indeed represented on the screen as the artist's only patron. But Isaac de Camondo's great-grandfather, about a hundred years earlier, had not yet acquired such sophisticated interests. Shortly before the French Revolution, he had sent to London, to represent his financial interests in the City, a young Jew from Ancona, a poor relative of his own and of the Roditi family, who amassed in England considerable wealth which later allowed his grandson, Benjamin Disraeli, to embark upon a political career.

The news of Disraeli's appointment as Prime Minister of England caused a panic among the Jewish brokers in dried Smyrna figs, olive oil in casks, or Cretan currants on the Ancona Exchange. Surely, if the British were now reduced to the choice of the grandson of a poor Ancona Jew as prime minister, their whole Empire must be tottering on the very brink of disaster. It took the Sephardic Jews of Ancona, Venice, Salonica, and Constantinople quite a while to become accustomed to the idea that Dizzy was one of the greatest prime ministers of a thriving Empire. My own great-great-grandfather finally added the name D'Israeli to his own family name, to stress his close relationship to Dizzy as statesman rather than as author of *Alroy* and of *Lothair*. Nor was this in any way a borrowing of alien feathers, for Benjamin Disraeli's own grandfather, in moving from Ancona to London via Venice, had somehow lost his real family name, that of our common ancestor, whatever it may have been, and allowed himself to be registered in England simply as D'Israeli, meaning "Son of Israel": like every other Italian Jew, he had borne, immediately after his own given name, the given name of his father too, but preceded by the preposition meaning "of" or "son of." In the old registries of the Italian consulate in Istanbul, I have seen that all Jews who enjoyed the privileges of Tuscan, Venetian, or Genoese protection bore such names as Behor di Nissim Camondo or Davide d'Israeli Taranto. Be that all as it may, every Roditi of our branch of the family, for two or three generations, was registered as a D'Israeli Roditi, and in my own line it was my grandfather who first dropped the D'Israeli when he acquired American citizenship in Boston in the 80's of last cen-

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tury, perhaps on the advice of his Gentile friends Ebenezer Jordan, of the Jordan Marsh Company, and the older Braggiotti, both of whom insisted on calling him at all times Count Roditi, because they also knew, in Paris, his cousins Count Moise and Count Isaac de Camondo. In the New York world of importers, however, my grandfather became known around 1900, because of his ability to obtain discounts, as Discount Roditi. We still own a piece of silver that he once received as a gift, with his initials derisively engraved beneath a heraldic crown.

My own family seems to have enjoyed the privileges of some kind of Italian citizenship ever since the heyday of the Venetian Empire. They probably changed the spelling of their name, from the Greek form Roditis to its present Italian form, when they also abandoned polygamy and the other peculiar usages and beliefs of their originally Karaitic Judaism. Later, when Venice became Austrian, the Roditi family acquired Tuscan citizenship, as Jews of Livorno residing in Constantinople. After 1866, they finally acquired full citizenship of a reunified Italy.

But even these privileges of extraterritoriality, in the chaotic feudal order of the decaying Ottoman Empire, assured those who enjoyed them but a limited security. True, an Armenian who could lay claim to Venetian protection might seek refuge, during a massacre, in premises that had been granted diplomatic extraterritoriality; but he could never rise, in more normal times, to such heights of power as some Christian or Jewish "slaves" of the Sultan who became Grand Viziers, though the latter would also spend many sleepless nights wondering whether they too, during a revolt of the Janissaries, might not, like other unfortunate "Infidel" Viziers, suddenly be stripped of all their power, enclosed in a wooden barrel lined with the sharp points of iron nails, and then allowed to roll down the rocky slopes of a hill in order to drown at last, if still alive, in the blue waters of the Bosphorus.

In Constantinople and Tunis, the Jews or Christians who enjoyed Genoese, Venetian, or Tuscan protection were free to wear whatever headdress they saw fit to adopt. In Tunis, for instance, the "Al-Granati" Jews of Livorno lived in the Soukh-el-Granah, a special section of the bazaars of the old city, and refrained from wearing the obligatory black cap of the "Tansi" Jews who, under the so-called Edict of the Caliph Omar, were *dhimmi,* mere chattels of their Moslem sovereign, private property of the Bey of Tunis. But marriages often occurred between the more secure Italian Christian or Jewish families of the Levant and the less privileged but often wealthier "Infidel" families who, whether Jewish or Christian, were the *dhimmi* of the ruler. A community of customs and interests, of psychology if not of actual status, thus led, among all Jews and Christians of the Ottoman Empire, to a common pattern of behavior that the West now scornfully dismisses as "Levantine." Armenians, Greeks, Jews, and Levantine Catholics, whether of Italian or Lebanese extraction, Copts too in Egypt, were organized in closely knit communities, whatever the national status of individual members. Functioning as an unofficial state within the state, each one of these communities guaranteed to its members, most of whom enjoyed no rights at all as citizens of any state, a kind of minimal security, often acquired by mass bribery or through the personal power of a few members who happened to be magnates of one kind or another. But this security could also prove quite nugatory, in times of extreme stress. The Levantine thus tended, as a beneficiary of so doubtful a security, to develop an ambivalent attitude both toward himself and toward society. Always anxious to save his own face and to acquire status in the eyes of others, he was at the same time suspicious of any status acquired by a Levantine who, he felt, must either have pulled a fast one on the social order that could grant him such status, or have allowed himself to be fooled by mere illusions of power and of security.

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While thus despising themselves and all other Levantines as marginal men, these Jews and Christians yet pined for real status or honor of an almost legendary kind, such as the security that their ancestors had once enjoyed as *cives romani* in the Pax Romana. Like the newly enriched Irish of New York and Chicago, the millionaire Lebanese, Greeks, Armenians, and Jews of Constantinople and Alexandria, between 1850 and 1900, were among the most avid customers for Papal titles that could be purchased. For each Count de Camondo in Istanbul, there existed in Brooklyn a Duchess of Brady; for each Count de Zogheb in Alexandria, a Count O'Kelly in Chicago. An Egyptian relative of my grandmother thus managed, toward the turn of the century, to obtain Austro-Hungarian citizenship in Trieste and, a few years later, a Hungarian title. His grandson, a few years ago, discovered to his surprise that this hereditary barony was the only one of the old man's many investments that had survived the ravages of time and still had some value on the marriage market in an otherwise unstable world. Whether in the Byzantine Empire, in Spain, in the chaotic Italy of the centuries between the fall of Rome and its rebirth as a modern capital, in the Ottoman Empire or in the Arab states of North Africa, the Sephardic Jews of the Mediterranean have learned, from bitter experience, never to set too much store by riches, except as means to an end, as currency that can purchase status or immunities. We thus hanker after what seems to be miraculous glory or power, like that of the now legendary Duke of Naxos, Don Joseph Mendes Nassi, of Benjamin Disraeli, Earl of Beaconsfield, of Sir Moses Montefiore, who came almost as a messiah from Victorian London to bring consolation and encouragement to his fellow Jews of the Ottoman Empire, or of the Counts de Camondo, once the Rothschilds of Venice and of the Near East.

But we also hanker at times after such impalpable heirlooms as the reflected glory of a great man of learning, poet or saint. Real estate? Stocks and bonds? Any carpet dealer can gain or lose such goods overnight. In a world that is anything but legendary, many of us aim indeed too high and then miss what modest opportunities are actually offered us. Like characters of *Solal* and other novels or tales of Albert Cohen, himself a Sephardic Jew from one of the Greek isles, we are dreamers or gamblers, despising material goods or squandering them recklessly, rarely amassing the kind of solid wealth that can be transmitted from one generation to the next.

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ARTHUR KOESTLER

Last of the Saints

■ In May, 1953, two years after Acharya Vinoba Bhave had set out on foot to solve India's problem by persuading the rich to give away their land to the poor, the Rajah of Ranka, province of Bihar, seized by the holy fever, donated 11,000 acres to one of his laborers and 2,500 acres to another.

Vinoba asked the Rajah why he had given four times more to the first than to the second. The Rajah shrugged respectfully and said he had given each laborer precisely the amount that he had asked for.

Vinoba sucked in his cheeks as if sucking an acid drop, a habit of his when thinking: "In this case, how much will you give me?"

"As much as you ask for," said the Rajah.

"How much land do you have altogether?"

"A hundred thousand acres uncultivated and about 7,000 self-cultivated."

"As a rule," said Vinoba, "I ask for one-sixth of the total. But in view of what you said, please make over to me the whole 100,000 acres of uncultivated land and one-sixth of the cultivated."

"As you wish," said the Rajah, and as soon as it was drafted, he signed the deed.

The story, when narrated by a Westerner for Western ears, carries a ring of melodrama or fairy tale which is as unavoidable as it is misleading; for such episodes were daily routine in the early years of Vinoba Bhave's Bhoodan campaign. The movement was growing like a slow, silent avalanche—without publicity, staff, or organization—an avalanche of dust stirred up by the old man's feet, stomping round the country from village to village, at the rate of four miles an hour, twelve to fifteen miles a day, seven days a week, covering up to date a total of 25,000 miles.

In April 1954, on the third anniversary of the movement, a conference was held at Bodh Gaya, the city where the Lord Buddha had obtained enlightenment under the Banyan tree. Among the speakers paying homage to Vinoba were Prime Minister Nehru and the leader of the Socialist party, Jayaprakash Narayan. The latter, one of the most revered figures in India, was at the time generally regarded as the likeliest successor to Nehru.

On that historic occasion he alienated forever thousands of his followers and electrified millions with a new and unexpected hope, for Jayaprakash, a leonine orator, announced quietly, almost shyly, his *Jeevan-dan*—his renunciation of politics and solemn pledge to devote the rest of his life to the service of the Bhoodan movement.

At the beginning of 1959, nearly eight years after the start of the movement, Vinoba had marched the equivalent of the length of the equator and collected nearly eight million acres of land. It seems a staggering figure, but it represents merely 15 per cent of his original target of 50 million acres as a minimum solution of India's rural problem. Moreover, less than half of the donated land is in cultivable condition, and owing to technical difficulties only a fraction of it has actually been distributed to the landless.

Among the Indians to whom I talked before I met Vinoba, about one-third shrugged him off as a saintly crank, another third regarded

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him as a historic figure equal to or greater than Gandhi; the remainder hovered between rational skepticism and irrational hope.

I wanted to meet Vinoba in his natural habitat, as it were, that is, in a rural area in the backwoods untouched by modern life. The local branch of the Bhoodan movement in Bombay informed me that he was expected on a certain date at a village called Raganathpur in Rajasthan.

I took the Frontier Mail to Dohad, and from there had to travel by Land-Rover a distance of 160 miles. It took some eight hours, a bone-shaking, occasionally frightening, but memorable experience.

On my map, the best I could find in Bombay, this whole region was a blank; not a single village was marked on the virginal blot that stretches from Dohad to Udaipur—a distance of 120 miles as the crow flies. Only the Mahi River wends its muddy way across it in lazy loops like a child's scribble on blotting paper. Stretches of metal road alternated with dirt tracks; repeatedly, for five or ten miles between two hamlets, there was no road of any description at all, and we lunged ahead cross-country over the stony desert, across gullies and banks of squelching reeds.

The villages we passed, and which do not appear on the map—Talud, Baswara, Sokusalya, Partapur, Gathi, Erdwala, Milula, Sagwala—seemed indeed to vegetate on the border of non-existence: a few ramshackle cubes of mud and straw dotted among the barren, archaic hills; shapeless, swaddled women with shapely jars on their heads standing rooted in the landscape or walking in a dream with eyes like buffaloes gazing into the river; fly-crusted infants sown indiscriminately into the dust like handfuls of cheap seed corn from the bag of India's six million annual surplus births. The scraggy cows were rummaging in the refuse for what was left after the children and scavengers had their pick; the skinny goats had a look like inmates of Belsen.

The village well: a hollowed pumpkin serving as a bucket to scoop out the slimy ooze; a water mill of a model pre-dating the Mogul conquest; then bare existence, with its suspended heartbeat, faded again into non-existence. Even the cacti looked like phantom creatures with distorted limbs, and the occasional palm trees stood irresolutely in the desolation like lone spinsters on Christmas Eve.

Raganathpur lies in a more fertile area than the places we had passed in the morning; it was larger and looked, by Indian standards, a shade more prosperous; by any other standards it was still unimaginably wretched and primitive.

But the village had awakened from its dazed, apathetic slumber; it was buzzing with life. A large open space had been marked off as the assembly ground, and on it squatted and chatted a multitude of three or four thousand people. They had come from the surrounding hamlets and were still flocking in from all directions, barefooted down the hills. A wooden platform had been erected, covered by a bamboo roof; there were garlands, greetings painted on the earth, pavement-artist fashion, and even a kind of triumphal arch—two vertical poles and a crosspiece hung with flowers and bamboo leaves.

It was still too early for the meeting; I found Vinoba and his disciples billeted in the most prosperous house of Raganathpur—it had a narrow veranda and three or four rooms with practically no furniture in them. The white-clad disciples and voluntary workers, about fifteen in number, were resting on the floor of the largest room, their mats laid out in parallel rows, covering all available space. Some were spinning on their small portable spindles, some asleep.

Vinobaji, they informed me, was by himself in another room; it was his hour reserved for study—he was reading the Koran in Arabic for the sixth time from end to end. They made me feel welcome without fuss and gave me a mat; since I had slept only three hours in the train, I fell asleep at once to the sound of subdued chatter, giggling, and the hum of the spinning wheels.

When they woke me up half an hour later, Vinoba and his retinue had just started for the assembly ground. He was marching across the village with his characteristic quick and precise step, his bare feet in tennis shoes, his long sinewy legs working like pistons. Whether he has to walk fifteen miles or fifty yards, his gait remains the same, as unmistakably his own as one's voice or signature.

He is of medium height, but when seated he looks smaller, when walking taller, due to his disproportionately long legs and to the impressive, bold, upright carriage of his body: he could be either a stern prophet or a gentle sergeant-major. At any rate, he looked more

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like an Old Testament prophet than a Hindu saint: silky white beard, short-cropped, dark hair, long face, bony nose, high forehead, gray eyes, twinkling smile.

He wears a very finely woven white *dhoty* which looks as if it were silk though it is, of course, cotton, spun and woven by himself; during one of his long sojourns in prison, he spun for a bet a length of yarn sufficient for a whole *dhoty* without once breaking the thread.

Now we were all seated on cushions on the dais. Vinoba had a scarf wrapped like a hood round his head; he looked smaller and there was a great stillness about him—one could feel the ripples of stillness spreading around.

The dense crowd squatting below was still chattering; the men to the left, women to the right, their gaudy *saris* forming a huge, undulating patchwork quilt. Some children were sitting in front, others in their mothers' laps; some were suckling, half-buried in the *saris*. Others toddled about, climbing over limbs and shoulders.

THERE were two or three fairly short speeches of welcome by local dignitaries, amplified by loudspeakers—the equipment travels ahead by jeep from village to village. Then the microphone was pushed unceremoniously in front of Vinoba, who sucked in his cheeks and immediately began to speak, in an informal, business-like manner, as if continuing an interrupted conversation.

He talks in a flat monotone without modulation or emphasis, almost too offhandedly, as if he were talking to himself and could not care less whether he is listened to or not; and, judging by the reactions of the crowd, this is indeed difficult to tell. They have heard legendary tales about Vinoba, they see him for the first time, and some of them have walked more than twenty miles to get here. When Vinoba briskly climbed up on the dais and as abruptly seated himself on a cushion, their eyes were drinking him in—there is no other word for it—but whether their ears were taking in his words was another question.

Most of the faces were devoid of expression, the women's almost painfully vacant. After a few minutes some started fidgeting, more newcomers arrived and squatted down. Some others left unceremoniously; babies cried, girls giggled. Most of them seemed to be only half listening, yet their eyes remained fixed on the white-clad, hooded figure, babbling away in a soft, bored voice into his microphone.

It was all very puzzling to me and somewhat disappointing. I failed to understand how Vinoba had achieved the fantastic feat of obtaining nearly eight million acres for nothing, from some 700,000 different donors, of influencing government legislation and galvanizing a whole sub-continent.

I could find in him no trace of magic, of hypnotic power, nor did I find any sign of the rapt attention such audiences were supposed to display. It was an amorphous, inattentive audience which became more fidgety as Vinoba talked on, and they hardly even pretended to listen—only their eyes kept feasting on him, returning every few seconds for another gulp.

Then gradually it dawned on me that it was not the words that mattered. Most of them were probably acquainted with Vinoba's message. They sat at his feet as the disciples sit at the *guru's* feet in the *ashram*, reading, chatting, following their own occupations. It is not his words that matter, but his presence—they breathe him, they imbibe him, it is a process of acquiring merit by spiritual osmosis. He need not have the gift of the orator, nor specific learning, nor mystic insight. All he need have is the quality of being a *guru:* that curious gift of radiating peace which is physically felt like a laying on of hands; of making people feel enriched by his mere presence; of making the ascetic life seem enviable to the sybarite, and washing the master's feet a blissful privilege.

In Europe the *gurus* have died out; in India the tradition is still alive, though rapidly declining. It was the secret of India's greatness, the emotional yeast by which its great *gurus*, from Buddha to Gandhi, kept the race in spiritual fermentation. It also had its dangers: worship of the *guru* could degenerate into spiritual debauch—I had a taste of it in the south.

But the scene I was witnessing—muddled, casual, confused—bore the stamp of authenticity.

Another curious characteristic of all authentic *gurus* is their unpredictability. When the restlessness of the audience became too much for Vinoba, he abruptly changed his tone, broke into a mocking peasant singsong to berate them with clucking and chortling noises, made those who were standing sit down and stopped them moving about. After that, he chanted a

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line of a hymn three times and asked for a minute of silent meditation.

Now silence was complete; even the children became big-eyed and quiet, and angels seemed to move over the huge crowd. Then Vinoba broke the spell, re-established the atmosphere of a family picnic and ended his speech as it had started—flatly, conversationally.

There was no flourish, his voice trailed off and nobody was quite sure whether he had finished until he sucked in his cheeks and pushed the microphone impatiently in front of the last speaker.

II

At the appointed time, half an hour after the meeting, I was summoned to the little veranda of the house where the Bhoodan workers stayed, for a private talk with Vinoba.

We were seated on cushions with four or five disciples around us; Vinoba opened the conversation by asking what purpose brought me to India. I said something vague about trying to find out how spiritual values could be saved in our juke-box and H-bomb civilization, and whether the West could learn anything from India in this respect.

Vinoba, whose eyes mostly seemed to be focused at some point halfway between himself and his interlocutor, which makes his gaze appear outgoing and withdrawn at the same time, considered the matter for a moment and suddenly began to laugh with amusement: "You say the spiritual values are in need of being 'saved' and you still call this civilization?"

But he quickly relented, fearing that he might have hurt the visitor's feelings: "We are not hostile to science, but science derives from the outer light, it must be complemented by the inner light. You have developed the head more than the heart; the heart did not keep pace.

"With us it was the opposite. It is with the development of the heart we have been concerned in India, and we still are concerned with it. That is the way of Bhoodan.

"The land which is given does not matter much in itself. It matters as a token of love and compassion. When land is given, both the donor and the receiver are changed. The spiritual value is in that change. There are half a million villages like this in India. I want them to come forward to lead the country and be its leaven."

This first talk lasted for three-quarters of an hour, and most of what he said about Bhoodan was already known to me. Again it was not so much what he said, but the way he said it which was so profoundly impressive: the complete lack of desire to persuade; the simple and direct persuasiveness which results from it; the emanation of peace; the precise, almost faultless English alternating with archaic imagery: "The earth is the peasants' mother. I give milk to the breast of the mother."

The talk was continued on the next day after another mass meeting at Dungarpur. This time we were sitting indoors and the atmosphere was more intimate.

I ASKED Vinoba to recount how exactly the idea of Bhoodan had occurred to him. He answered with a good-humored pun: "So you want to hear about the *moving spirit* of the movement?" He then recited a kind of dehydrated account of his life, leaving out all dramatic highlights: there was no mention of the years spent in prison, or of his adoption by Gandhi.

"After I completed my college studies I left my family in search of truth and I was thinking of going to the Himalayas for meditation, but before going there I went to Benares where I thought to study for some time. But Bapu [Gandhi] had been there and all the people were talking of the speech he had made in Kashi about non-violent resistance. So I wrote him a letter asking him some questions, to which he replied, and thus our correspondence began to grow. Then he wrote that these conundrums which I put before him cannot be solved by correspondence or mere discussion, only by practical action, and asked me to come to his *ashram* and lead my life there. This was in 1916 when I was twenty-one years old. . . ."

In actual fact, Vinoba, whose real name was Vinayak, had at the age of nineteen burnt his college papers and certificates in his mother's presence and announced his decision to walk the path which leads to the liberation of the self and its unity with Brahma. His father, a civil servant of orthodox Brahminic views (he was the son of the village high priest), insisted that Vinayak should sit for the intermediate examinations in Bombay. Vinayak took the train to Bombay from his home state, Baroda, but got out on the way and headed for Benares, the holy city, to study Sanskrit and the Vedic scriptures.

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Benares, with its mixture of sanctimoniousness, beggary, rigid scholasticism, and unholy stench, was a disappointment; he fell ill and went through a spiritual crisis. Then at the solemn inauguration of the Hindu University at Benares by the Viceroy, with Annie Besant in the chair and an audience stuffed with Maharajahs and Pundits, Gandhi caused a beautiful scandal by making a political speech and telling the Viceroy to go home: "If for such plain speaking we are sentenced to death, let us go cheerfully to the gallows."

This episode decided Vinoba's life. He had found the answer he had been searching for, the synthesis between saintly aspiration and service to society, between the spiritual and the practical, the active Yogi and the pacifist Commissar.

"This was in 1916, and from that time till Bapu's death in 1948 I was engaged in social work, especially in serving the people in the villages round the *ashram,* teaching students and practicing meditation for a few hours of the day. This went on till his death."

IN FACT, a lot more went on in those thirty-two years of Vinoba's life. For one thing, five and a half of them were spent in prison for his participation in various civil disobedience campaigns. Gandhi, who had adopted Vinoba as his spiritual son and heir, always singled him out to be the first to court imprisonment in the non-cooperation and quit-India campaigns from 1939 onward.

After Vinoba's third arrest, he had become a national figure and Gandhi issued a press release in which he sang the praise of Vinoba's virtues as a scholar, itinerant teacher, social worker, menial worker, healer of lepers, and a propagandist for the educational and economic value of handicrafts: "He has revolutionized spinning and drawn out its hitherto unknown possibilities. For perfect spinning he has probably no rival in India."

Vinoba was scathing about his jailers ("Have you ever been to a circus?" he asked a visitor. "There men command the animals. Here it is just the reverse"), but in reality he took to prisons like a duck to water. He organized Sanskrit classes, scripture classes, spinning classes, and still had more time on his hands than at the *ashram* for meditation and the pursuit of his hobbies. He had three: metaphysics, mathematics, and languages.

"Next to God," he confessed, "if I love anything best it is mathematics." He speaks eleven or twelve languages, including eight or nine Indian dialects, and it takes him about six weeks to learn a new dialect.

One of his former prison mates, Pyaralal Nayar (once Gandhi's secretary, now keeper of the Gandhi Archive), told me in Delhi: "I would rather share a prison cell with a criminal than with a saint. Vinobaji used to start his Sanskrit classes at 4 A.M., and since most of his pupils were blockheads, he yelled at them so that I couldn't sleep."

Then came independence, and in 1948 the assassination of Gandhi by Vinoba's namesake and caste-sake, Vinayak Godse. Both Vinayaks were Marasthi Brahmins: the assassin embodying the extreme of fanaticism, the heir the extreme of tolerance, both inherent in the Hindu potential. Vinoba was now fifty-three.

"After Bapu's death, I felt the urge to come out of the *ashram* and to see the condition of the people of India with my own eyes. I had been in contact with the poor in the vicinity of the *ashram,* but I wanted to see how things were in other parts of the country. So I thought of traveling through India, but I felt that saving time and space by using high-speed vehicles wouldn't help me much toward a solution of the problem of poverty by non-violent means, which I was searching for; so I decided to walk on foot. I started by presenting myself at the *Sarvodaya* conference, which was to be held in Hyderabad that year.

"While going there my heart was full of meditation. I had arguments with Communist leaders. I told them: 'You talk of Communism, but I want to *live* in communism, with God—because to live in communism with God is to live in communism with the poor.'

"That is why I voluntarily adopted the life of the poor. In that way my heart and their hearts are so much intermingled.

"I went to the people and discussed with them how to get out of their difficulties by the power which is inherent in the soul. They felt that I was only working as their mouthpiece, only expressing the thought of their hearts. And then they began to think in their minds and in that way this revolution was brought about.

"They started to donate land to people even poorer than themselves, although the land was to come from the rich. In the beginning, it was the poor who came forward to share, but as this revolution grew, the hardened hearts also began to part with their land."

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VINOBA had telescoped the events of three years into one. After Gandhi's assassination, he had continued to live in retirement, occupied with social work at his *ashram*. In 1951, *Sarvodaya Samaj,* the Brotherhood for Good of All, founded by Gandhi, held its third anniversary conference near Hyderabad.

The atmosphere in the country was one of profound dejection. Independence had failed to bring the kingdom of heaven; it had brought instead the mutual massacre of Hindu and Moslem, a mud-flood of starved refugees, increased poverty, land hunger, and the threat of civil war. Gandhi was dead, his ideals trampled to dust.

When Vinoba, who at first refused to attend the conference, was finally persuaded to do so, he went on foot. At the end of that 315-mile march, his "heart full of meditation," he had become fully awakened to the condition of his country; his thirty-two years of hiding in retirement had come to an end.

On the last day of the conference, Vinoba abruptly announced that he was going to tour the district of Telengana, where the Communist guerillas were fighting government troops. Telengana was part of the Nizam of Hyderabad's five-million-acre state, controlled by a thousand families.

In one of the first villages that Vinoba visited, a population of 3,000 was living on a cultivable area of 3,000 acres; these belonged to ninety families, the remaining 500 families were landless. Vinoba summed up the situation: "The rich have fathered the Communists." It was in this God-forsaken district, in the village of Panchampalli, on April 18, 1851, that Bhoodan was born. On that historic day, in the village of Panchampalli, the Harijans (Untouchables) had come to him with their tale of misery. He asked them how much land they would need for bare subsistence. After some hesitation, their spokesman said: eighty acres.

"I considered that they ought to be given those eighty acres by the government. But then I thought that perhaps a few men may obtain land that way, but it would not solve the problem. So I suddenly turned to the people of the village and asked whether there were some landowners among them willing to give land to their brethren so that they may not die of starvation; and a man came forward and offered a hundred acres of land."

That man was Sri V. R. Reddy, a small landowner, among whose relatives some had turned Communist. His donation started Bhoodan:

"That night when I went to bed I could not sleep. I was thinking over the event. What has happened to me today? A man has come forward and donated a hundred acres of his land without any compulsion. Is there a sign from God in this?

"As I am a mathematician, I began to work out how much land would be needed for all the landless people in India. I came to the conclusion that five *crore* [50 million acres] will be required for distribution, that is, one sixth of all the cultivable land in India. I could not believe that people will offer that amount of land. The idea had come to me and attacked me, and my mind tried to resist, because I was not ready to accept it. And so I hesitated. But a voice from within myself told me that if I doubt, if I do not put my faith in the power of love and God, then I must abandon my belief in non-violence and follow the violent way of the Communists.

"You can't sit quiet any longer. You must go either this way or that way. God keeps the hunger in the child's belly and he also keeps the milk in the mother's breast; so if you go begging in the name of God, you will get a response.

"But I had only a hundred acres of land in my hand, and this was a question of asking for 50 million acres. So I did not consult any of my friends or any institution because they would have said that I may expect to get thousands of acres, but I could not expect to get millions. So I decided to go ahead by myself to start begging for land and to see how people respond.

"So the next day in the morning I left for the next village (Tongadpalli). The village people had prepared breakfast for me. I told them that I won't breakfast, I won't break my fast, while my countrymen are hungry; give me a few acres of land for my breakfast. And God's will was there and they gave me twenty-five acres.

"In this way the matter was decided, and I have started this work in that Communist-infected area—although I feel that the Communists are also my brothers. Last year I marched to Kerala, and the Communist prime minister of Kerala State said: 'I doubt whether you will succeed, but your movement may be an alternative to our movement—*if* you succeed.' So now all depends upon the success."

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III

"He is a *Bhim*—a Hercules," Gandhi had once exclaimed, talking of Vinoba. At that time Vinoba had weighed ninety-eight pounds and lived on bananas, milk, and lemon.

He is evidently the kind of person, to be found only in India, who takes to the ascetic life naturally and joyously—without frustration, without a show of self-righteousness or a need for self-punishment. Gandhi renounced sex in middle age; Vinoba made his vow of chastity at the age of twelve.

He is afflicted with chronic malaria, peptic ulcers, and is deaf in one ear—the result of a blow from a fanatic Brahmin, whose shrine Vinoba visited in the company of Untouchables. His diet at present consists of small cups of curd and molasses taken every three or four hours, a total of 1,100 calories a day. Yet his body is all muscle and sinew, his skin has a healthy glow, his gestures are vigorous, and on the march he can outpace any of the younger disciples.

He follows the same daily routine all round the week: reveille at 3 A.M., ablution and prayers; starting the march at 4 A.M., arriving at the next village between nine and ten; then a short rest followed by talks with the villagers and visitors till one. From one to three he spins and reads; at 3 P.M. the meeting starts and lasts till five; from 5 to 7 P.M., more talks to the villagers and possibly a second, smaller meeting; 8 P.M. prayers; 8:30 to bed.

After the first talk with Vinoba in Raganathpur, I had to drive back to Dungarpur where I spent the night. The next morning at sunrise I set out on foot toward Raganathpur to meet Vinoba's party halfway on the road.

The landscape was deserted. At first there was a metal road, then the usual dusty cart track wending its way into the hills. I passed a Gypsy encampment built of tins and rags, compared to which even the mud huts were palaces—poverty in India has unfathomable layers of depth like the subconscious.

As the sky grew lighter, I met a few farmers who gave a solemn, unsmiling salute; a couple of tribesmen carrying swords on their loincloths and nothing else; then I saw in the distance a small group in a dust-cloud, wandering across the hills to meet Vinoba's procession.

Peasant women stood in front of their mud huts staring into the distance; the land was still empty, but there was expectancy in the air. At a turn of the road three archways had been erected at intervals of a hundred yards. They were cleverly built of columns of large, colored earthenware jars placed on top of each other, held in place by bamboo poles. But there was nobody about and the arches looked rather pointless in the deserted landscape.

I MET the procession some five or six miles out of town. They approached at a kind of fast trot. In front, carrying a storm lantern, now extinguished, marched Rainshankar Maharaj—a patriarch of seventy-five and an expert spinner, who had walked with Vinoba for the last 15,000 miles and spun a hundred yards of yarn.

Then came Vinoba in a white hood, *dhoty*, and tennis shoes, vigorously treading the dust as if he were pounding corn, flanked by his two closest female disciples: Mahadevi Thai, elderly, energetic, with steel-framed spectacles, who had once been with Gandhi and was jailed five times; and pleasant, round-faced Kusum, a former schoolteacher, who takes down all his speeches and conversations in longhand. Behind them came Vinoba's secretary, a raven-haired young man, then a yellow-robed Japanese monk with a drum, and about a dozen more disciples and Bhoodan workers.

For about half an hour we marched in silence. Vinoba usually keeps silent until around six. By the time we reached the first of the welcoming arches, about an hour and a half after I had passed it, there were two rows of young girls lined up on the sides of the road, singing hymns; their leader presented Vinoba with a ball of raw cotton. Next came two rows of young boys, then two lines of women and two of men.

From here on the landscape, which had been empty such a short while ago, began to fill up with people, and our procession grew. Vinoba was now chatting animatedly with any of the disciples who managed to elbow his way to the front. Occasionally he made a joke, and then laughter rippled back through the whole procession, though they did not know what the joke was about.

A young man in a blue hood fought his way forward and slipped his hand into Vinoba's; for a while they marched in silence, affectionately holding hands; then the young man, satisfied, fell back into the crowd. A blind man, supported by a friend, stood in the middle of the road, his

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hands outstretched toward the approaching procession; when Vinoba, without stopping, had given him his blessing, he remained standing there, buffeted about by the procession, a boulder in the midst of an unruly stream. The Japanese monk was now beating his drum with all his might.

As we walked on rapidly through the narrow path between the growing crowd on both sides of the road I caught glimpses of the enraptured faces of women turned into medieval statues, and of old men, open-mouthed, with vacant expressions of wonder. At the third gate Vinoba abruptly halted and a cup of milk curd was served to him. He ate it standing, turning each spoonful several times round in his mouth with a rabbit-like chewing motion; then we marched on.

Our party, which originally had numbered about twenty, had now swollen to several hundred, and the fields on both sides of the road were thronged with people. The people behind Vinoba were pushing and jockeying for position, and the crowd in the fields began to run parallel to the procession, outflanking it and threatening to submerge the thin line of orderlies who were trying to keep the road ahead clear. Women were pushed over into the dust and at moments the multitude seemed on the verge of hysteria; I was reminded that only a few days ago at Nagpur there had been some five hundred casualties when a crowd of several thousand broke through a cordon to see its favorite film stars.

At this stage Vinoba gave an astonishing display of what the irreverent Mr. Potter would call saintmanship: he abruptly left the metal road and began zigzagging in a trot through the fields, pushing his way through the running crowd, putting them to shame and making them stop, all agape. Then, still at a run, leaving the panting disciples behind him, he returned to the road which now, as if by magic, was again clear.

On two more occasions, when pushed from behind, he broke into a run with the immediate effect of making the procession slow down, with those in front bracing their backs against the onrush. It was superbly done, but his expression was unsmiling, almost grim.

"One spoonful of buttermilk is enough to turn a big pot of milk into curds," Vinoba said in 1954 when he had received land gifts from 300,000 different donors. "These 300,000 people will act exactly like a spoonful of buttermilk to convert the rest of the population."

This prediction has not come true. Vinoba had set out to collect fifty million acres of cultivable land in five years; he had collected less than four million in nine years and only a fraction of the donated land has been distributed.

In recent years his methods have become more adaptable and practical. He originally refused cash donations; he now accepts them gratefully, together with donations of seed corn, cattle, equipment, wells. "Bhoodan" has been complemented by "Gramdan," a system under which the land donated by individuals or a whole village is put to use in cooperative or collective farming. Yet in spite of this evolution toward new forms, the Bhoodan movement, measured in purely quantitative terms, can at best be called a partial success, at worst a noble failure.

But statistics represent only one aspect of reality—and as far as India is concerned the least important one. "The Bhoodan movement," Prime Minister Nehru said in 1954 in his inaugural speech at a Bhoodan workers' training camp, "has unquestionably become a powerful factor in India. What is really important is not the actual acreage of land obtained, but the new spirit infused into the minds of the people. . . . The movement has changed the atmosphere in India in regard to the agricultural question. Thereby it has not only helped directly to solve the problem to some extent, but indirectly it has also induced the government . . . to attempt some satisfactory solution."

That the Indian government had been in need of an "inducement" to solve the most burning question of the country was one of the disarmingly naive admissions which Mr. Nehru from time to time feels compelled to make; but it was the strict truth and a measure of the quantitatively unmeasurable impact of Vinoba Bhave on India's destiny.

In the critical year 1951, the appearance of the irascible saint had started the turning of the tide against the Communists in Hyderabad province, the heart of India. In the years that followed he had directly and indirectly influenced state and government legislation, forced the politicians' attention on the country's most urgent problem, and created a phalanx of supporters, cutting across all party and class divisions, from left-wing Socialists to dethroned Maharajahs, and including some of the most hard-headed and influential industrialists of the country.

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Improbable as these achievements were, the real significance of the phenomenon Vinoba lies still on a different level. Bhoodan at its inception was, and to a large extent still is, a one-man show, the fantastic enterprise of a saintly ascetic who had always shunned the public eye (except when forced to court imprisonment) until, at the age of fifty-six, an inner compulsion set him on the road toward the greatest peaceful revolution since Gandhi.

It galvanized the whole of India, filled millions of half-starved peasants and disillusioned intellectuals with a new hope, and made even the skeptics recognize that there may be other effective methods of action besides the blueprints of the rationalist planner and the voice of the soap-box orator. To put it bluntly, Acharya Vinoba Bhave has proved that even in the 20th century a saint may influence history—at least up to a point, at least in India.

BARENDA SLOUGH

In the San Joaquin Valley

Philip Levine

EARTH and water without form,
Change or pause: as if the third
Day had not come, this calm norm
Of chaos denies the Word.

One sees only a surface
Pocked with rushes, the starved clumps
Pressed between water and space—
Rootless, perennial stumps

Fixed in position, entombed
In nothing; it is too late
To bring forth branches, to bloom
Or die, only the long wait

Lies ahead, a parody
Of perfection. Who denies
This is Creation, this sea
Constant before the stunned eye's

Insatiable gaze, shall find
Nothing he can comprehend.
Here the mind beholds the mind
As it shall be in the end.

PHILIP LEVINE, who lives in Fresno, California, has contributed verse to the *Paris Review, Poetry,* and other literary magazines. His "Premonition at Twilight" was printed in our December 1958 number.

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Our Changing Elite Colleges

LAWRENCE BLOOMGARDEN

■ Since the end of World War II, a significant change has taken place in the character of the so-called prestige college, a change which is bound to affect the patterns of American higher education in general. Scholastic aptitude—which used to be a relatively minor consideration in the selection of applicants to these colleges—has now become the major criterion for admission, with important results for the caliber and composition of their student bodies.

The one most important factor contributing to this change is the steadily increasing number of Americans who go to college. Thomas Jefferson felt that democracy required equal educational opportunity for all, but he thought that three years was as much schooling as most people could reasonably use. By the Jacksonian era, however, it was generally believed that democracy required at least a grade school education for every citizen. Still later, democracy came to be considered ill-served by such minimal progress, and between 1870 and 1955, the rate of high school attendance increased twenty times faster than the rate of population growth. Higher education naturally followed suit. In 1947, a Presidential commission concluded that half the young people in America were capable of taking at least two years of college and that a full third could manage the entire four years.

At the time this commission made its report, 21 per cent of the college-age group in the entire population was actually attending college. Within a decade, the figure leaped to 32 per cent, and the proportion of American youth that goes to college today is over eight times that of England and five times that of the Soviet Union.

The number of 18-year-olds was no higher in the 1950's than in the 1940's, which means that the jump in college attendance between the two decades had nothing to do with a rise in population. The 1960's, however, will produce a million-and-a-quarter more 18-year-olds each year than did the 50's, while college attendance is expected to shoot from its present proportion of 32 per cent to at least 40 per cent. (In some states, this has already happened.) Thus, the next ten years will almost certainly see a total of some 6 million Americans working for academic degrees, compared with the 3,250,000 who did so in the 50's and the 2 million who went to college a decade earlier. The population explosion, technological advance, and ideological factors have combined to bring us a new era in higher education.

The transformation during the past dozen years or so in character of the old prestige colleges is a direct consequence of this enormous increase of applicants. Of course an unofficial hierarchy of college prestige has existed for decades, but status was never based on the caliber of the student body. (Studies made in the early 1930's, indeed, showed that the scholastic aptitude of freshmen at the City College of New York was higher than at most prestige colleges.) Yet the status of the prestige colleges was real enough. Not only did they spend more money per student for instruction than other schools, but they were also able to attract distinguished faculties. Even more im-

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portant, perhaps, was the record of their alumni. According to a study by Havemann and West, the average annual income of graduates of Harvard, Yale, and Princeton is 75 per cent higher than the average income of college graduates in general; the alumni of the other Ivy League schools (Brown, Columbia, Cornell, Dartmouth, and Pennsylvania) are 50 per cent higher in their annual earnings than the general average. At the same time, graduates of the prestige colleges constitute an unusual proportion of our top business leaders. Warner and Abegglen in *Big Business Leaders in America* find that 86 of the 476 top American industrialists who went to college at all went either to Harvard, Yale, or Princeton. (Statistically, the number should have been 2 rather than 86.)

The increased competition for admission has, naturally enough, been felt most strongly at the old prestige colleges, which include the eight members of the Ivy League, their feminine counterpart, the "Seven Sisters" (Barnard, Mount Holyoke, Pembroke, Radcliffe, Smith, Vassar, and Wellesley), such technical schools as MIT, Carnegie Tech, and California Tech, and several smaller eastern colleges like the "potted Ivy" trio (Williams, Amherst, and Wesleyan). Between 1940 and 1959, the number of applicants to all these colleges tripled, while their capacity increased, on the average, by only 20 per cent. In 1941, Amherst, for example, had 371 applicants for 232 openings, while Princeton had 925 for 644. Today, Princeton has 3,213 applicants for 757 places, and Amherst chooses among 1,677 applicants to fill its 259 openings. These ratios are typical. Prestige colleges today average about four applicants per place, where before the war they had only three contenders for every two places. Not only that, but these applicants are likely to include the best students. An analysis of the colleges selected by winners of National Merit Scholarships show that their selections favor the old prestige colleges by a wide margin. And the parents of these students, asked to list the "best" colleges, followed the precise listing of Havemann and West (Harvard, Yale, Princeton, MIT and Columbia, in that order of preference).

It is circumstances such as these which have forced the prestige colleges to put a greater emphasis than they once did on scholastic ability as a criterion of admission. In 1941, the average College Entrance Board aptitude score* of the students at a typical prestige college was about 500; today it is 625 (and 650 at Princeton, Columbia, and Amherst, or about the top 2 per cent of their age group). Their 1941 score placed the students of the prestige college exactly in the middle of the scale, or with the average of all persons who took the test. (Since only the better students were involved in the college boards, the middle of the scale was roughly coincidental with the top 25 per cent of all high school graduates in 1941.) Today, however, the average student at the prestige colleges with his 625 score is in the top 10 per cent of all those examined and in the top 4 per cent of the population. In other words, he is about equal on the aptitude scale to the honor student at the same colleges 19 years ago.†

Scholastic aptitude is still not the only criterion for admission to the prestige college, but it has now become the most important one. In a typical situation, nine out of ten applicants with 725 scores will be accepted, as against only one of ten with 525. Many other factors are considered in the admission process, including motivation and personality, but there is no reliable technique for evaluating these qualities; the personal interview, which has traditionally been used for this purpose, seems just as likely to provide a false picture as a true one. In any case, so expensive has the system of personal interviews become that colleges are being forced to rely more and more on grades and examination scores. The Harvard Graduate School of Business and certain other highly selective institutions, indeed, have actually abandoned the personal interview. Harvard found that it could save the $35,000 per year which had been spent on interviews without harming the effectiveness of its admission procedures.

The new emphasis on aptitude has naturally generated other changes of a social character at the old elite colleges. Prep school products once outnumbered high school graduates

* Scores of current tests are correlated with the 1941 scores by a statistical device, so that a 500 score today represents the same test aptitude it did 19 years ago.

† A margin of error is statistically inevitable in measuring the scholastic aptitude of a given individual. However, the data used here are based upon groups of at least a thousand, and in such groups, the margins of error will balance out. A freshman class with an average aptitude of 650 can be considered appreciably superior in scholastic potential to a class with an average aptitude of 600.

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in these institutions by over 2 to 1; today they are about equal—which also means that students from less favored economic and social groups are now attending in larger numbers. Such students are helped by scholarships, which are currently awarded (in amounts averaging 60 per cent of tuition fee, room and board) to about one-third of the total student population of the prestige colleges.

In the pre-war years, athletics and extra-curricular life generally seemed more important to the status of a college than what was happening in the classrooms. But the center of top football achievement has shifted through the years from Harvard, Yale, and Princeton to the Midwest and Southwest. Today when the roar of the Columbia Lion on the college gridiron has long been muted, it seems odd to recall that twenty-six years ago Columbia defeated Stanford in the Rose Bowl. (And Columbia only played Stanford because Princeton, which was undefeated and numbered Columbia among its victims, had turned down the Rose Bowl invitation.)

In the days when admissions were based on rather minimal scholarship requirements, the desire for social homogeneity at the prestige colleges was strong. A former member of Princeton's admission committee, Professor William Jacobs, has observed that prior to World War II Princeton never rejected an applicant with "good character and adequate scholastic preparation." In a recent article in the *Princeton Alumni Weekly,* he described his shock at meeting his first class at Princeton in 1940: "It was like looking at a room full of siblings." (And the editor of the *Alumni Weekly,* as if to underscore the point, felt compelled to explain to alumni the meaning of the word "sibling" in a footnote.)

The "character" requirement in prestige colleges a generation ago clearly had a particular application to Jews. At Princeton in the 1920's and 30's, only 2 per cent of the student body was Jewish, as against about 15 per cent in most Eastern colleges at the time. At Harvard in 1922, where the proportion of Jewish students had become high, President A. Lawrence Lowell openly proposed a Jewish quota on admissions, and he was supported by a group of Harvard undergraduates in the following words: "Were it only a matter of scholarship, there could be no objection to Jews at all. But they do not mix. They destroy the unity of the college. They are distasteful to the men who have made Harvard what it is today, and if we do not look out, these men will not send their sons to Harvard."

A discriminatory admissions policy against Jews has been a rather consistent feature in private colleges—particularly those of prestige status, where the social prejudices of the surrounding community and of the alumni were clearly reflected. In 1948 when a committee of the Association of American Colleges reported on the long history of discriminatory admissions, it frankly acknowledged: "We have a troubled conscience." As late as 1945, President Ernest M. Hopkins of Dartmouth College defended the quota system with regard to Jewish students. "Dartmouth," he said, "is a Christian college founded for the Christianization of its students." But three years later, a new president of Dartmouth, John Sloan Dickey, expressed a completely different view: "This college neither teaches nor practices religious or racial prejudice, and I do not believe that it can for long permit certain national fraternities through their charter provisions or national policies to impose prejudice on Dartmouth men." During the past decade Dartmouth has been in the forefront of the prestige colleges in eliminating social discrimination. And the number of Jewish students has correspondingly increased—8 to 15 per cent of the student body.

A RECONSTRUCTION of the social milieu within the college was obviously necessary to the establishment of a system of admissions based largely on merit, since the presence of students who were not eligible for membership in the social clubs and fraternities on grounds of ethnic origin could only cause trouble. This problem had been resolved for Jewish students at a few colleges by the authorization of Jewish fraternities, but only after the end of World War II was a real assault launched on exclusionary social practices. In the case of Amherst (which had never authorized the formation of Jewish fraternities), a fiat issued by the Board of Trustees required the elimination of discriminatory practices by the fraternities; at Princeton, the undergraduates, with administrative approval, undertook to open the Eating Clubs to all students.* Such changes have made the tran-

* This effort broke down in 1958. Most of the students who failed to get bids in that year were Jewish. (See "Bicker at Princeton," COMMENTARY, May 1958.) Before the 1959 elections, the club presidents, supported by President Goheen, undertook to eliminate Jewish quotas entirely.

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sition from a discriminatory admissions policy to one based largely on merit easier to accomplish, for the new system has affected Jewish applicants very dramatically. Jewish students now comprise 15 per cent of the undergraduate population at Princeton (it was 2 per cent in 1941), 15 per cent at Williams and Wesleyan (which had 4 or 5 per cent in 1941) and over 20 per cent at Amherst (where the proportion 19 years ago was also about 4 per cent). In the Ivy League as a whole, the ratio of Jewish students has risen in the past decade from 15 to 22 per cent—a jump of almost 50 per cent.

Despite these gains, discrimination has not yet been wholly eliminated, and the clear statement of policy made by MIT—"There are no quotas of any kind, either by secondary schools, geographical location, national origin, race, creed or color"—is still the only one of its kind among the elite colleges. The results of one analysis suggests that a Jewish applicant to an Ivy League college will be accepted only if his aptitude score is considerably higher than the general average. Thus, the average scores of the successful applicants from a special New York City high school (largely Jewish in its composition) to several Ivy League colleges was 675, as compared with the general average of 625, while very few graduates of this school at the general average figure were accepted. Of course, a number of other factors (geography, preferential treatment to the sons of alumni, and extra-curricular activities) may have contributed to this difference. Indeed, in the next ten years—when the number of applicants to elite colleges will increase by 75 per cent while the number of openings will go up by no more than 25 per cent—the desire to build a "balanced" student body may come to weigh more heavily than the urge to judge applicants by merit alone.

Just as high aptitude students are being clustered in certain colleges, so educational resources, too, are being concentrated increasingly in the same places. Today 45 per cent of all college and university endowment funds are now held by 18 (of the 1,800) American institutions of higher learning. The same 18 institutions receive over a third of all annual alumni gifts (and 20 per cent of all gifts to higher education). Since money is the sinew through which educational strength is asserted and maintained, we may expect the gap between the elite colleges and the others to grow. Five years ago, a third of all new college teachers held a doctor's degree; this year only 22 per cent of the new teachers were similarly prepared. And when we consider that for every $100 the college teacher earned in 1930, he now receives only $85 in 1930 dollars (while the average American earns $175 today for every $100 he earned in 1930), it becomes evident that the richer elite colleges will continue to attract the ablest teachers even as they continue to skim the cream of the nation's high school graduates through generous academic scholarships.

MEANWHILE, what of the non-elite colleges? The bulk of increased attendance has been absorbed during the past decade by public colleges. In 1950, attendance was divided equally between public and private colleges. Today, 60 per cent of all college students are enrolled in institutions under public auspices—whose rate of growth, moreover, is three times that of the private ones. (Many state universities, indeed, are required to accept every applicant within the state who has a high school diploma.) As the next tidal wave of applicants reaches the admissions gates, most of them will inevitably attend public colleges where costs are lower and admissions easier. William Clyde de Vane, Dean of Yale College, grimly predicts that state universities will be helpless against these mounting pressures—that they will be distorted and battered out of shape and will probably sink.

In an attempt to maintain standards, honors programs for the more capable students are being set up in many state universities, and an organization was formed last year specifically for the purpose of encouraging this kind of segmentation. As American higher education becomes increasingly mass-oriented, the advent of the academically elite colleges—or elite programs within less selective colleges—provides perhaps the only means of assuring excellence.

Some critics have charged that educational segregation of the gifted is no more defensible than racial segregation, and a British writer (Michael Young of London University) recently warned, in the *Rise of the Meritocracy,* that a trend such as the one described here can lead to the formation of a new caste system even more rigid than the old. Yet the basic democratic value in education is equality of *opportunity,* and this value is being honored more than ever before by the elite colleges. These

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colleges, it should be noted, are mainly undergraduate liberal arts institutions, or else technical schools like MIT whose orientation is basically toward the liberal arts. (MIT gives more weight in its admissions decisions to verbal than to mathematical aptitude.)* Since American liberal arts colleges are often nothing more than small places where small men teach and small batches of uneducated students are awarded degrees, it becomes apparent that if the gifted students were distributed indiscriminately throughout the country, they would be stunted and thwarted by the prevailing level of mediocrity.

The emergence of the academically elite colleges is not the result of any deliberate national policy, but of the sheer coincidence of admissions pressures. Yet the needs of a dynamic democratic society can best be served by providing for the full development of the talents of all its citizens in a setting likely to encourage achievement at all intellectual levels, *including* the highest. Talent, it must not be forgotten, cuts sharply across economic, social, ethnic, and racial lines, and consequently the principle of equality seems far better assured when excellence is a primary objective in higher education.

* Liberal arts curricula comprise only half of all American undergraduate instruction; students enrolled in these programs are only a fourth of the student population. Actually, the bulk of the American college education is vocationally oriented through schools of engineering, teaching, business, nursing and junior colleges where liberal arts courses are usually incidental.

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Democracy and Revolution II

America, Czechoslovakia, and Indonesia

OSCAR GASS

■ Democracy and revolution are dominant, recurring themes in the politics of the past two centuries. They work variously in combination and tension, with other major themes: autocracy and privilege, empire and dependency, capitalism and socialism, white man and colored man. We need to understand these matters better; we shall be dealing with them all our lives.

At the threshold stands a major obstacle to understanding. It is a fighting counterrevolutionary doctrine, a product of the French revolutionary struggle, and not devoid of insight. But it masquerades as a reasoned philosophical analysis of the nature of society, government, and recent history. We have to remove the masks, so that we can profit from the perceptions of bitter partisans, without giving their slogans undue weight.

In the first part of this essay I discussed the reasoned, comprehensive analysis of the revolutionary age 1760–1800 by Professor R. R. Palmer and also the penetrating study of its most contemned element, the revolutionary crowd in France, by Mr. George Rudé. I also suggested a re-examination of the reputation of the greatest spokesman of the counterrevolutionary tradition, Edmund Burke, and attempted a denial of his claim to be considered a serious philosopher, a revealing historian, or a considerable statesman.

I propose now to examine briefly recent publications on three revolutions—in America, Europe, and Asia—before turning to more analytical comments on several problems of democracy and revolution in our time.

The American Revolution

The movement of the American colonies toward independence, in the years 1760 to 1776, reveals a profound, unacknowledged estrangement from much that Britain was or was taken to be. Gilded pronouncements of affection and allegiance predominate down through 1774. The crown is sacred, particularly when worn by such a patriot king. Parliament is the noblest creation of British genius. The residents of the American colonies look to the people of Britain as their dear relatives. Theirs is indeed a fostering mother country. But all this is on the level of high sentence—high and empty. On the practical level, the colonies will pay nothing for their great love. They will concede nothing. They are determined to be equal, and, if necessary, they will be separate.

In the 1760's, after the great British-French war for empire, the colonies were called upon only to provide part of the cost of their own defense. Grenville asks the colonial agents, headed by Franklin, repeatedly, "Can you gentlemen . . . name any mode of raising money for public service that the people would have less objection to . . . ?" There is no affirmative response. The colonies find every mode inappropriate, illegal, unconstitutional, unnatural—in the end, dastardly. First it is improper to tax

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them internally, then also externally; later it is wrong to control their trade; finally they will not bear any legislation by Parliament at all. For a time, they play with the idea of allegiance to the king alone, but there is effectively no king in England who does not act, in great matters, with Parliament. Allegiance to king alone is only a pretense and a short-lived one. When they come to a Declaration of Independence, they will attribute the worst evils to the king in person—though, for many of the best informed, only as a slogan, only half believing. They are estranged, they are going apart; they must first quarrel and call names. The usually judicious Franklin will now, in 1775, deprecate any idea of coupling together Britain dead and America living, and he writes: ". . . when I consider the extream corruption prevalent among all orders of men in this old rotten State, and the glorious publick virtue so predominant in our rising country, I cannot but apprehend more mischief than benefit from a closer union." Better equal and separate.

THE separation may have been wise, but it does not involve us in accepting the slogans under which it was accomplished. The men of the 18th century could not perhaps bear the simplicity of their estrangement, their desire to govern themselves. We can bear it. It does not therefore beseem us, in 1958, to quote the statement that "A great empire and little minds go ill together" and to suggest, as Commager and Morris do,* that the little minds were all on one side of the water. If it was wise to preserve a political union of the British and American peoples, then little minds ruled on both sides. The British government thought predominantly in terms of subordination and a lesson to be taught unruly subjects. But the American colonial leadership also gave itself little serious concern, in the years after 1760, to provide a revenue base and a working system for cooperation with Britain. The American leadership did not will the means of union with Britain, just as our Southern states did not will the means to make an end of Negro slavery a century later. They did not bother their heads. They would have their own way, on their own terms.

A slight tendency to overvalue American patriotic legend is the one defect I find in the two volumes of selections on the American Revolution edited by Commager and Morris. It is not only their dust jacket that is red, white, and blue. Professor Commager has sinned gravely elsewhere by idolatrous worship on the altar of the American past. In 1951 he declared* his conviction ". . . that most of the problems that confront Americans today . . . are really old and familiar, and that Americans need not look abroad for solutions, or fabricate new ones, but that they can turn, with confidence, to their own historical past." This is a kind of silliness which we have unfortunately grown used to indulging in historians. But it does not seriously disfigure the work on the American Revolution. For the most part, Commager and Morris are just, searching, and informative. Their introductory sections do not have the smooth continuity of conventional historical narrative, but perhaps so much the better, so much the more truthful. They know that there *was* a revolution, and they know it was accompanied by civil war, lynching, extensive confiscation of property, and the emigration of those most loyal to the old cause. They do not indulge the idea that a Washington, a Livingston, or a Gouverneur Morris, being wealthy gentlemen, could not approve the rancorous pursuit of their enemies. On the contrary, they describe clearly how each side in this civil war "met bitterness with bitterness and savagery with savagery." Our literature does not contain a weighty, comprehensive narrative history of the American Revolution. If I were limited to two volumes, I would take these.

Commager and Morris see the American Revolution also as rich in political ideas and in precedents relevant far beyond the United States. What was then done of such weight and novelty? The Americans set the example of a colony breaking away from a mother country. They called constitutional conventions, constituted states, congresses, a confederation and a federation of United States. They acted as if men could create institutions, and as if reason were related to the process. More, they acted on the principle that the right and obligation to shape and reshape governments belongs to those who are on earth and that the living are not wisely ruled by the dead. They disestablished churches, and they established constitutions that

* H. S. Commager and Richard B. Morris (editors), *The Spirit of 'Seventy-Six*. The Story of the American Revolution as Told by Participants. Bobbs-Merrill, 1958, 2 vols., 1348 pp., $15.00.

* *Living Ideas in America*, p. XVII.

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claimed no Providential sanction. They moved in the direction of universal suffrage and legislated to safeguard individual civil liberties. They were concerned with the need for popular education. They proclaimed human equality and accepted Negro slavery. They enunciated principles and made compromises; they solved some problems, for their time, and knowingly left others for an uncertain future.

Some Americans of the 20th century have been concerned to deny that there ever was an American Revolution. Others have suggested that the men of '76 had no political ideas worth mentioning—or only ideas to be found already in St. Thomas Aquinas and Cicero. In great part, this denial of reality or novelty to the American Revolution reflects the mere vulgar search for conventional respectability. Revolutionaries are violent, blood-stained, disorderly people, but our ancestry is of the purest strain of Christendom or (what is equally respectable) Western civilization. But there are more subtle grounds of denial. One is the dominance of crude Marxian imagery, even among political conservatives. The American Revolution was neither the revolt of the bourgeoisie against feudalism nor the revolt of the proletariat against bourgeois society; therefore it was no revolution at all. Related to such imaginative inadequacy, is the inability to perceive that the issues of the American Revolution were once real issues, worth fighting about. Colony and mother country; convention, congress, and constitution; established church and religious freedom; civil rights and popular suffrage—are not all these symbols for children? They are not American issues now; could they ever have been issues calling for a revolution?

But the deepest source of denial is perhaps a sense of insufficiency. There was a time when the ideas of their revolution were proclaimed, by some Americans, as providing answers to all political questions, for all societies, at all times. Only the most stupid would advance such a claim today. The three great political questions of our time center around world peace, underdeveloped societies, and socialism. In part, these are merely 20th-century facets of permanent social problems. But to permanent social problems, it is possible to give only general answers, not sufficiently particular to determine specific choices and actions. To those particular aspects of these permanent problems that are distinctively and urgently of our time, and which require specific answers, the men of '76 do not speak at all—or speak like those unmeaning oracles that provide an answer only to the suppliant who already has one. We, the Americans of the 20th century, have made only a limited contribution to fundamental thinking about these, our own political problems. Where the sons are so unproductive, what could be more comforting than to deny originality, genuine novelty, and creative power to the fathers also? Only total denial of the reality of all human creativity. Where everything is null, our own unproductivity cannot be a reproach.

Overthrow of a Democracy: Czechoslovakia

Communism seized power in Czechoslovakia easily. It did not take over a shattered society. Czechoslovakia suffered relatively little material damage in war, resistance, or revolution. When the Communist take-over was accomplished, in 1948, the country was prospering. All Europe wanted its industrial exports. Its farmers had received the spoil of expelled Germans. Russian troops had been withdrawn in 1945. The leaderships of the various democratic parties were confident that, taken together, they had the support of a majority of the voters. Beneš reigned in dignity in the presidential palace and made speeches, in private, testifying to the firmness with which he would resist the Communists. But, in the end, Beneš signed whatever Gottwald insisted upon: it was only necessary for Gottwald to take the trouble to repeat the same demands day after day. There was a show of force but no fighting. The Communists merely arrested their democratic opposition. Most resistance promptly subsided into muttering. Everything was legal. Masaryk even joined the government that carried out the putsch. Prominent and convinced democrats who could evade arrest and expected no mercy fled abroad.

Professor Josef Korbel gives* a better connected account of this Communist victory than has previously been assembled in one place. As a former senior Czechoslovak diplomat and a careful student of documents, he is well situated to know what happened. He describes the course of events clearly and with few immediately apparent gaps—except one. That one is the motivation of those 1,354,601 persons (more than 10 per cent of the whole population of

* *The Communist Subversion of Czechoslovakia,* Princeton, 1959, 258 pp., $5.00.

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the country) who, according to the figures Korbel cites, had joined the Czechoslovak Communist party by February 1948. And when we reflect on this gap, we begin to feel that perhaps Professor Korbel has left out something more. And on further reflection we are driven, however reluctantly, to the conclusion that, while he has told us a great deal, and we have read with interest, he has really not helped us to understand what it all means. He has not even tried to explain what it was about democracy and Communism in Czechoslovakia that gave the latter so easy a victory over the former.

At bottom, Professor Korbel, though he is a sensible man, explains the Czechoslovak revolution by demonry. Only now it is the Communists of 1948 who are the demons, not the Jacobins of 1793. And against demons, mere honorable men apparently cannot stand. In the years to 1948, Korbel says, ". . .I had shared their belief that one might cooperate with Czech Communists." But in retrospect he now sees that the establishment of Communism in Czechoslovakia ". . .is a story of deliberate intent, of unscrupulous design, in which no falsehood was too great, no betrayal too vicious, no treachery too infamous, no deceit too contemptuous. . . ." The rhetoric of condemnation flows exuberantly to a climax in the discovery that ". . . the total perfidy of the Communist mind no civilized man is able to comprehend, no man of good will is able to believe." We are back with Lucifer again, but he wears a deeper disguise; unlike the traditional Devil, no one is able to believe in him!

The Czechoslovak democrats were not fighters. They had the worldly good sense not to fight in September 1938, and they were the same people—with an older, more exhausted wisdom—in February 1948. Fighting and the planning of fighting was either for professional soldiers or for vulgarians, hooligans. Had the Israeli leadership of the 1940's shared the mentality of Czechoslovak democracy, there never would have been a State of Israel. In the years 1945–48, the Czechoslovak democrats, as reasonable men, took into account the likelihood that Russia would help the Czech Communists, but the West would not help them. In March 1948, a month after the Czech collapse, Stalin began to threaten Tito with total annihilation, but Tito was prepared to risk everything. The Czech democrats operated with more caution and less success. As was said long ago in another context, "The Lord will only keep those who are resolved to stake their strength to the uttermost and to concentrate their will." And He may not keep even them.

The Czechoslovak democratic leaders were also not organizers. In Moscow, before returning home, the leaders of the democratic parties yielded to the Communists and their fellow-travelers the tasks of administering the Czechoslovak police, army, education, information, industry, agriculture, and social welfare. The Communists themselves moved into local governments and the trade unions, and they also used their administration of land reform and German expulsion to build a strong following among the peasants. The Social Democrats retained preeminence in the trade unions, but when, in the crisis of February 1948, the Social Democratic leadership was defeated by its own fellow travelers, the democratic parties were left with no point of strength in any organized body. The appeal of the Czechoslovak democratic parties was to the decent individual, the isolated voter, the person with too much good sense to concentrate attention on politics.

In the years 1945–48, Czechoslovak Communism recruited hundreds of thousands of militant members. They were organized and led by assiduous—if devious—professionals. Communism mattered to them very much. If a Communist society were the end and goal toward which all reality labors, it was also something they could help bring about through individual daily effort. There is no evidence that democracy was important, in a comparable way, to any considerable number of people. For that matter, there is no evidence that democracy, as distinguished from nationalism, was important in that way to President Eduard Beneš. He seems to have been more profoundly convinced that ". . .the State must be administered and led." The Communists called him "a democrat-formalist"; there is no reason to say that the name is unjust or that it would be unfair in a wider application. The Communists said also that Beneš was "neither salty, nor greasy," and they prophesied that all such would come to a miserable end. An older book says it differently: "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth."

Would not our American democracy of 1960 be rejected by the same test?

Karl Marx erred in forecasting the increasing

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proletarianization of the more industrialized societies of Europe and America. The concept of increasing proletarianization may, however, be given two aspects. On the one hand, the economic fact of deprivation of any significant stake in property, so that the proletarian *has* nothing to give the state but his children. On the other hand, the socio-psychological fact of the alienation of the proletarian from the state, so that he *feels* that he has no stake or interest in it. For some years now, it has been fashionable among European and American publicists to describe Communism as a doctrine for the underdeveloped economies of Asia and Africa. In such economies, it is said, particularly in the aftermath of war and famine, there may be masses of urban and rural proletarians, economically deprived and alien in feeling. But our Western advanced economies are safe from all this.

To such confidence of safety, the example of Czechoslovakia might come as a solvent, if the example were taken to heart and not comfortingly explained away. Czechoslovakia was the most successful, functioning industrialized economy in Central Europe when it was taken over by Communism, without serious resistance. And when we ponder the example of Czechoslovakia, without being taken in by Marxism materialism, our thinking inevitably falls next upon the working classes of France and Italy. In the past fifteen years, both countries have accomplished considerable economic progress. In mere economic measures, their working classes may not qualify as proletarian. But their alienation of sympathy from the states in which they live has been substantially constant in the years since World War II. Communism has maintained its hold over the majority of these French and Italian workers.

Let us not foreshorten the future and deprive it of all disturbing novelty. No, we have no ground for confidence that Communism is a doctrine that can win its way to power only in underdeveloped economies.

A Frustrated Colonial Revolution: Indonesia

Mr. Louis Fischer shared a banana with President Sukarno, and Sukarno called him "Louis"; Sukarno also called him a fighter.* Fischer is against Dutch colonialism. That takes as much courage, in this context, as being against Nasser in Tel Aviv. Fischer is in favor of birth control. Any visiting foreigner may favor that in Indonesia; it goes with open house to foreign social workers. Fischer is also in favor of a federal senate for Indonesia. That view is acceptable, too, from a foreigner. It may even be regarded as an amiable idiosyncrasy. As there is today effectively no Indonesian parliament, why should it not have a second house?

Mr. Fischer expresses himself also, in part and for a time, against the State Department. He finds the Department too indulgent of the 1958 Padang (Sumatra) revolt against the Sukarno government and not sufficiently quick and abundant in its aid to Sukarno. Fischer expresses a judgment too against such foreign aid as contributes to the "political power of a clique" and against aiding "ruling oligarchs by propping them up with arms and dollars." This is after he has looked around Indonesia for several weeks and has met and observed both President Sukarno and Chief of Staff, Major General Nasution. But he does not tie together the judgment regarding oligarchs and the observations in Indonesia. Can it be that Fischer is incapable of recognizing an oligarch, modern style? In any case, we must not expect the State Department to be influenced by such a level of criticism. The Department has modest professionals in Far Eastern affairs who know far more about Indonesia than does Mr. Fischer.

His first ten chapters tell the history of Indonesia through 1945. They are best skipped. Mr. Fischer's contribution lies in a faithful journalist's account of things seen and of conversations held with Indonesian political figures. On history, the student of Indonesian matters will find nothing new, and the general reader will do better in a textbook.* Fischer's narrative of the years 1945–49 is worth reading, the earlier chapters not.

Mr. Fischer went early in his journey to Bali, and, for him, it is an "Isle of the Gods," a shockingly unperceptive tourist's Bali. He has seen the temple but not the witch play, and he has not understood either the dancer or the woodcarver. He has completely missed the Balinese emotional starvation that goes far deeper than an occasional empty stomach. Even a reporter with sharp eyes cannot be expected to understand everything in a few days. But Mr.

* *The Story of Indonesia,* Harper, 341 pp., $5.00.

* For example, the sections on Indonesia by Mr. Herbert Feith in *Governments and Politics of Southeast Asia,* Cornell, 1959.

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Fischer's long bibliography gives us eight titles on Raffles, a book of voyages dated 1700, a volume on Dutch alliances dated 1712, and even a book of *The Voyages of Christopher Columbus*—who spent his search in quite other Indies. Mr. Fischer, and his readers, would have fared better if he had left these titles in the library catalogue and read instead the distinguished 1942 volume by Bateson and Mead on *Balinese Character*. These careful students of Bali would have helped him to see the horrible frustration in traditional Balinese culture, the somber meaning in what is otherwise gilded appearance, and they might have deepened his search for other not immediately apparent meanings in Indonesian character and public life.

Fischer writes a chapter entitled "Land Without Tension," in which he repeats the usual views regarding the well-known Indonesian tradition of consensus, compromise, and avoidance of straightforward dissent. He finds the root of these practices in personal consideration, which he summarizes in the maxims "Always give joy first" and "Circumlocution is the best policy." But the Indonesian tradition of individual circumlocution and group-determined consensus is found also in primitive Bali, in a culture as remote as any ever observed from the ideas of personal consideration and personal thoughtfulness. Even in contemportry Jakarta, Indonesian circumlocution reflects something more than tolerance and a desire to "give joy first"; it reflects also the denial of individuality, where the inner core of moral self-assertion is weak, where social pressure is all-surrounding, and where there is universal fear of eventful reprisals from those who wield power.

Where dissent is unclear, assent is also of doubtful reliance. In a relatively static community, the achievement of a working consensus by elaborate indirection (and even its enunciation, as in Bali, by a medium in trance) may minimize tensions. But it is doubtful whether circumlocution and evasion are techniques of thought and discourse that can yield useful results in a community subject to novel, cumulative change. Then to "speak Javanese" is to avoid issues, to build up individual and social tensions, and to afford them no resolution. If such observations may be permitted a friend who is not a countryman, the deep revolution which Indonesia needs is perhaps, first, one in modes of thought and, second, one in modes of discourse. The mind and hand of man could, no doubt, build a creative society in contemporary Indonesia. The Indonesian hand does not lack sensitivity and adaptability to the acquisition of skills. But the mind must first effortfully, painfully remake the foundations and workings of the mind and then learn to speak what it has thought. Directness and the discipline of the issue are sadly lacking, and these can be acquired at no sacrifice of true personal consideration. Such change is what is hardest. Repetitious commonplace and pallid courtesy will not help.

Independent Indonesia has failed to achieve economic growth. Independence was recognized in December 1949. By 1957, economic reconstruction may have come near to compensating for the retrogression that occurred during World War II and in the subsequent fighting for Indonesian independence. But economic development had taken no significant step forward by 1957, and it has since then fallen back. Even in 1957 food supplies were more pinched than they were in 1938–40. Indonesia's exports had declined. If we eliminate plants directed and managed by foreign interests, Indonesian manufacturing industry was on a most elementary level. It may be doubted whether there was more modern manufacturing, managed by Indonesians, among all the ninety million people in Indonesia in 1959 than there was in the one city of Paris in 1789. The Paris of 1789 certainly had more skilled industrial labor and experienced management. Indonesian agriculture is also of shockingly low productivity. Despite favorable natural conditions and the lavish application of labor, Indonesian yields per acre of rice and corn (the two preferred staple foods) are barely a third of the yields achieved in good modern cultivation. Due to this agricultural backwardness, the country has now become a chronic food importer.

In mid-1957, President Sukarno installed a government of experts, subject to his close personal control. Under the administration of these non-party experts, the cost of living is acknowledged to have doubled in two years. Late in 1957, Indonesia failed to get its own way in the United Nations on the trivial question of western New Guinea. At the same time, an attempt was made to assassinate Sukarno. His response to foreign and domestic opposition was to direct popular attention toward seizing all Dutch property in Indonesia. The remaining Dutch residents were hastily expelled. (With the Dutch gone, some three million Chinese be-

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came the next target.) The economy has continued to go from bad to worse. The Sukarno government has been widely criticized for this economic failure. Sukarno's response has been to emphasize the uniqueness of Indonesian circumstances and values. Criticism regarding a price level that rises 5 per cent a month, Sukarno has said recently, reflects ideas developed in Holland thirty years ago. Such an extraneous standard, he has said, "does not measure Indonesian air." Dr. Johnson said that patriotism was the last refuge of a scoundrel. We have made progress. The last refuge now is an appreciation of national and cultural uniqueness.

Sukarno is described by Mr. Fischer as a great lover, who loves and wishes to be loved. Foreign residents of Indonesia tend to describe him as a great playboy, who loves official cars, motorcycle escorts, and uniforms. Mohammed Hatta describes him (without using the ugly word) as a demagogue, who will always rouse the crowd to some irrelevant nationalist demonstration. Perhaps there is no inconsistency in these three descriptions. They all point to a figure who (once formal national independence was achieved) had no political objectives that would interfere with the primary objective of occupying the highest seat of public eminence.

In contrast, development-minded Indonesian democrats could not find their way to power after the first revolutionary period. Sjahrir, the first prime minister, and perhaps intellectually the most attractive of Indonesian political figures, has been the leading light in a kind of unorganized Fabian Society. Attractive to intellectuals, civil servants, and some army officers, he nevertheless built no mass organization. Sumitro, Indonesia's outstanding professor of economics and a socialist finance minister, joined the Padang rebels. Hatta has preserved a reputation as an economist and administrator, which impresses Mr. Fischer as it does other journalists, not by any demonstrated competence as an economic administrator. What Hatta *has* demonstrated, in common with other development-minded Indonesian democrats, is that he is not a successful man of action. Perhaps the contemporary intellectual has characteristics of mind and taste that unsuit him for leadership in a society that is not totalitarian but has a level of education very remote from his and an outlook he does not share. The non-intellectual Sukarno is the success figure in individual leadership in Indonesia, as the Communists are in building mass organizations.

In Indonesia today, power is concentrated primarily in the civil and military officers of government. The reach of power is not totalitarian; the requisite organization is lacking. The Indonesian "power elite" is small. Mr. Herbert Feith estimates it at five hundred persons. These include civil servants, army officers, businessmen, professors, and a few other people of importance, most of whom live in Jakarta. The power elite is subject to unorganized influence first by a circle of the better educated, which may be taken as constituted roughly by about 800,000 buyers of daily newspapers and their families. It is also subject to organized influence from trade unions, religious bodies, and other special interest groups. Practically all of the elite accepts a vague patina of "socialist" ideas, combined with emphasis on the importance of Indonesia's cultural tradition and nationhood. This elite prefers to run its own national show, with such aid as it can get abroad, indifferently from Communists or anti-Communists. It is not much interested in regional decentralization. (Despite Mr. Fischer, the Padang rebels were as nationally-minded as Sukarno or Hatta. They wished to rule in Jakarta, not Padang. They took the route to power they thought open.) Domestically, the Indonesian elite has popular sympathies. It would like to educate the masses. It would like to achieve economic growth, to make both classes and masses better off. But it does not know how to set its hand to practical development work, and it desires quick results.

The physical resource base of Indonesia, both for agriculture and industry, is superior to that of Japan. A competent agriculture could double and triple yields, while releasing labor for industry. Nowhere between the Persian Gulf and California is there an equal resource base for a great petro-chemical industry. The social climate of Indonesia is perhaps not so favorable for economic growth as the social organization of Japan was a century ago, but, on the other side, the world has made a great deal of technical progress in that century, and technique is available to any newcomer who has the determination to take it. It would, on balance, perhaps not be unreasonable to set for Indonesia the target of matching the present Japanese standard of living in something less than a century. But that is a target which would call for great initiative, creative economic organizing capacity, social discipline, and some abstinence, if not sacrifice.

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The Indonesian Republic has now gotten rid of the skills and experience of its former Dutch residents. It is hemming in its Chinese businessmen. Financial instability and disrespect for foreign property rights have frightened off new European and American capital outside the oil business. Private Indonesian businessmen do not have the capital, the experience, or the disposition to create major new industries. Indonesian economic development, therefore, depends on the state. Politics comes before economics. The Republic has moved away from a libertarian society, without developing any effective method of fostering economic growth.

We have to ask ourselves: how much of this Indonesian development reflects recurrent trends in the colonial revolutions of our time? Are such trends avoidable? By our initiative or by the initiative primarily of the former colonial peoples themselves? What it is then we should try to do to assist them, and what measure of success can we reasonably expect?

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LETTERS FROM READERS

Jews in Rural America

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I read with great interest the article by Louise Laser ("The Only Jewish Family in Town," December 1959). We have lived for some time in communities where Jews were considered rarities. We are now entering our second year in Pullman, Washington, a college town and grain shipping terminus with a year-round population of 6,000. There are eight Jewish families here, all connected with Washington State University. We have never (in the last ten years) had more than ten Jewish students at a time.

Communities of this sort offer a singular challenge to the Jew. . . . Here in the West—in a community with a "genuinely rural culture"—we have found an intelligence, an honesty, and a frank naivety which could not be approximated in the city. While it is easy to pass off the rural student as "low academic level," effort on the part of the teacher reveals a great native intelligence, which must be exploited and matured. . . . If properly handled, he becomes more than a match for his big-city cousin. While I do not make accusations at Mrs. Laser, I feel that all too frequently committed Jews in the academic profession seek only the Jewish student, the alert, and frequently overaggressive competitor for a berth in medical school or law school, and tend to ignore the mediocre, regardless of religion. Yet the brilliant student tends to train himself. Lifting the mediocre to a higher status represents the real challenge of teaching. . . .

There is much that the Jew can receive from American rural tradition, and it is easy for him to become part of it, without sacrificing one iota of his Jewishness. We have our "little synagogue" here, though sometimes it meets in the Methodist church and sometimes in the Presbyterian. Our public schools had a Chanukah observance this year, and mention is always made of the High Holy Days. We have a regular Hebrew and Sunday school, and indeed, our Hebrew teacher is a full voting member of the local Ministerial Association.

The moral is quite simple. Rather than spend our apprenticeship in academic "Siberia" and then move back into the "ghetto-college" environment, I would consider it a duty for Jewish academicians to work toward a dispersal of Jewish faculties and students. To remain in Siberia and make it into "utopia" is indeed a challenge, but if our Jewish virtues are what we think they are, why should we deny them to rural America?

GERALD M. PHILLIPS

Pullman, Washington

America's Hidden Resource

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Mr. Herbert Hill's stimulating article, "Labor Unions and the Negro," in your December 1959 number, is far and away the most up-to-date comprehensive discussion of the subject. . . . [Moreover] my own immediate personal experience has taught me that there is a category of skilled and even professional workers, whom Mr. Hill does not discuss, [who] constitute an incalculable social and economic waste. Now in their late forties and early fifties, some of these Negroes, of whom I happen to be one (Harvard College '32), even took degrees from so-called Ivy League colleges just prior to the enlargement of employment opportunities for our people as the concomitant and aftermath of World War II. Compelled to devote their best years to underpaid jobs within the segregated Negro economy, barely above the level of subsistence, often their only tangible compensation was the sense of responsibility in managerial positions.

Can they look to the organized labor movement for jobs commensurate with their higher education, training, and experience? Not even the most enlightened American trade union has any serious program for finding and utilizing our nation's often hidden human resources. . . .

WILLIAM HARRISON

Associate Editor
Boston Chronicle
Boston, Massachusetts

Kibbutz Life

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Because kibbutzim have been significant in the development of Israel, they have been

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placed in glass houses for the whole Zionist world to disparage. They have naturally attracted curiosity seekers, amateur psychologists, and sensation-seeking reporters. One such is Gerda L. Cohen, whose article, "The 'Affluent' Kibbutzim," appears in your October 1959 issue. . . . Her presentation is an unsympathetic and gross caricature. . . . She has gratuitously divided kibbutzim into left and right by attributing the political orientation of individual members to the social structure. Yet the actual divisions of kibbutzim happens quite differently. . . .

Also, it has been popular in recent years to ascribe the origins of kibbutz life to a reaction to the *shtetl*. This presumably revealing insight fails on two counts. In the first place, the founders and the leaders as well as large numbers of members of kibbutzim came from the capitals of Europe (also, in small measure, America); the great majority of *shtetl* escapees did not go to kibbutzim at all. Secondly, the Jewish immigration to the United States consisted of the same proportion of *shtetl* escapees.

Miss Cohen's conception of the kibbutznik's world as being divided into "black and white" —"America was black, Russia white"—is a pure figment of her imagination. She unquestionably heard some adolescents thus express themselves and she may even have heard a similar statement at a friendly evening gathering. What she did not observe were the sly looks and nudging of elbows of her friends who saw her earnestly recording the statement as genuine. . . . Miss Cohen's analysis of child education is presumptuous. . . . She has analyzed the psychiatric troubles as deriving from "a defect in the collective system." With similar certitude, she has analyzed the behavior of kibbutz soldiers as amenable to regimentation and "for that reason, perhaps, they command praise in their military service." She does not explain how that reconciles with her contention that the kibbutz child rebels against his need to "eat, excrete, and wash in unison."

Miss Cohen has missed nothing, from bedwetting to the "decadent white gown" at the wedding. She has described a society which is so manifestly obnoxious in every detail that one must assume armies of guards standing in each entrance holding individuals by force. Else, how can one explain 80,000 souls living, working, and creating within the kibbutz movement? . . .

SAADIA GELB
(Kibbutz K'far Blum)
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Gerda Cohen is obviously a very clever, sophisticated writer, skies above us narrow-minded, provincial Israelis whose jingoist sons in the kibbutzim feel lost without regimentation. However, may I be allowed to question the veracity of the assertion that the Jews in Poland after World War I were more oppressed than the Jews in the Ukraine, before that war? Anti-Semitism in Poland then, bad as it was, never descended to the low depths of the Ukraine, the land of Chmielnicki, Petlura, and Bandera. To talk of an atmosphere of "the sharp reek of burning feathers and blood spattering" is gross exaggeration. . . . As an old-time Israeli originating from a Polish *shtetl*, I am also quite sure it is sheer nonsense to say that the members of the left kibbutzim (of whom, incidentally, I am no sympathizer!) hated Judaism out of "a recollection of Talmudic squalor," whatever that may mean. . . . I also take exception to the derision with which Miss Cohen alludes to the Ein Gedi sabra pioneers. She says they are rooted to their homeland to the point of jingoism. To this "cosmopolite," love for one's country is mere jingoism. . . . we had legions of broadminded, acid-tongued, and shallow writers like Miss Cohen in Europe, and what good were they to us, or anyone else for that matter? Thank God for the "jingoistic regimented" pioneers at Ein Gedi.

NIR MATITIAHU
Ramat Chen
Israel

MISS COHEN *writes:*

Only a reprint of my article side by side with Mr. Gelb's bellow of indignation would enable readers to judge for themselves where he has distorted it. Of course he will find my description obnoxious if he can't bear to read that kibbutz toddlers do their toilet drill in groups. . . . [Mr. Gelb's] telepathic powers, to be sure, compensate for his general misreading: "She unquestionably heard some adolescents, etc. . . ." If only Mr. Gelb had been along to correct my impression when kibbutz leaders solemnly debated whether to accept capitalist American tractors. What a pity the compulsion to "uphold" the kibbutz can totally vitiate people's sense of humor and perspective. The same applies to Mr. Nir, whose eye can register nothing between derision or adulation, where kibbutzim are concerned. And I don't really think it's worth while arguing the relative merits of Polish and Ukrainian pogroms.

Omission

By an error, the name of the translator of *A Kindly Contagion* (reviewed in our January issue) was omitted. The book, written by Walter Toman, was translated by Harry Zohn.

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Intellectuals, Scientists, and the Future*

STEVEN MARCUS

■ "By training I was a scientist," remarks Sir Charles Snow at the beginning of *The Two Cultures and the Scientific Revolution,* "by vocation I was a writer. That was all. It was a piece of luck, if you like, that arose through coming from a poor home." The author of this essay, which was delivered as the Rede Lecture last year at Cambridge University, is a distinguished scientist and scientific administrator in the British civil service. He is also the novelist C. P. Snow. In him the estrangement of the scientist from the literary intellectual—the "two cultures" of his title—seems never to have happened, and with casual irony Snow attributes this happy circumstance to accident: like many another Englishman he has located his destiny in his birth. There is, indeed, little question that Snow speaks with a singular kind of authority. No one else in England, or America, is able to command this mediate position or address himself to a widely dispersed yet highly educated audience with anything like his confidence and simplicity. Compared to him, someone like Robert Oppenheimer reminds one of homecoming day at Ethical Culture, an impression I found borne out in a recent admiring article in the Paris edition of the *Herald Tribune* describing Oppenheimer as an "American saint" —which in turn prompted me to recollect that, as George Orwell once observed, sainthood is something human beings ought to avoid.

C. P. Snow is no saint. The directness and robustness with which he manages his authority constitute much of his charm, the charm of a mundane, serious, civilized man, invested with both official and unofficial prestige and power, addressing himself to a conflict and a crisis. The conflict has to do with the two cultures, scientific and intellectual, and the crisis with what he calls the Scientific Revolution, the application of advanced, systematic scientific techniques to industry. Snow regards these conditions as bearing powerfully on our relations both with the Soviet Union and the poorer, backward nations of the world. Unable to find much that is happening in either of the two cultures to relieve his sense of dissatisfaction and distress, he makes certain suggestions, mostly in respect to higher education, which are designed to set us on the way toward some solution of the conflict.

THIS little book has stirred up a considerable controversy in England, and Snow's argument has been attacked and defended on a variety of grounds. Actually, he has two arguments to make, running alongside each other and converging at certain points, but essentially distinct. The one that concerns the two cultures has been the subject of the more animated discussion. It confronts head-on the fact that "the intellectual life of the whole of western society is increasingly split into two polar groups." At one pole are the literary intellectuals, who for Snow represent "the traditional culture"; at the other, the physical scientists with—what? Well, as he says, certain "common attitudes, common standards and patterns of behaviour, common approaches and assumptions. This goes surprisingly wide and deep. It cuts across other mental patterns, such as those of religion or politics or class." This seems to shift the definition of culture toward its anthropological sense (C. P. Snow's scientists might very well be Samoans), which isn't the sense one normally intends in speaking about "the traditional culture." However, the two groups undeniably exist, eyeing each other across "a gulf of mutual incomprehension," feeling mutual "hostility and dislike," sharing almost no common ground. The situation is deplorable, and in Snow's view, dangerous and destructive.

* A review of *The Two Cultures and the Scientific Revolution,* by C. P. Snow; Cambridge University Press, 58 pp., $1.75. (Paperback 75¢)

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Although he has much to say in criticism of both "cultures," Snow in the end comes down rather firmly on the side of the scientists. And it is, I believe, in his description of the nature of the "cultures" that he can be seen to make a number of significant errors, in observation and in judgment. Scientists seem naturally to be men who "have the future in their bones," he notes—a proposition which appears to be generally reasonable. But at the other pole—where the feelings of one group tend to "become the anti-feelings of the other"—the traditional culture "responds by wishing the future did not exist." Without intending to split semantic hairs, I must say that I don't really know what the statement means, especially since in a footnote Snow refers to George Orwell's *1984* as "the strongest possible wish that the future should not exist." Not *that* one, to be sure, not the future represented in *1984*—in writing such a book one of Orwell's impulses was to prevent, insofar as a novelist can undertake to do so, that future, to register his protest against its coming about. Snow seems to have forgotten that, as Thomas Mann once wrote, "Prophecies are sometimes made in order that they may not come to pass—as a spell, indeed, against their fulfillment." No more does C. P. Snow wish for such a future, which is exactly why he wrote his own book. He is a man of solid and vigorous hopefulness, of large practical intelligence, and what disturbs him about something like *1984*, I think, is its quality of despair. But *1984* is also suffused with other emotions, one of them being a passion of honesty: to see the object as in itself it really is—or might become. It is, we remind ourselves, a work of literature, a novel; and as such, its relation to the future, its consequences in the practical life of society, have a different character than the work of the scientist or the statesman.

C. P. Snow proceeds to the charge that "western intellectuals have never tried, wanted, or been able to understand the industrial revolution, much less accept it," and he calls them "natural Luddites," breakers of machines. The writing of men like Ruskin or Morris or D. H. Lawrence, he asserts, "were not in effect more than screams of horror. It is hard to think of a writer of high class who really stretched his imaginative sympathy, who could see at once the hideous back-streets, the smoking chimneys, the internal price—and also the prospects of life that were opening out for the poor, the intimations, up to now unknown except to the lucky, which were just coming within reach of the remaining 99 per cent of his brother men." Snow believes he is requiring only that writers be disinterested, but in fact he is asking that they be abstract; if one succeeds in moving from a contemplation of "the hideous back-streets" to the "prospects of life . . . opening out for the poor," the back-streets will tend to appear less hideous, less actual. It may be the virtue, as it certainly is the work, of men with primarily practical and political interests to think in this way, but it surely isn't the virtue or the work of writers. Writers undertake to tell us what it is like to be alive at a certain moment in history, to feel and work and think (even of the future) in particular material, temporal, and spiritual circumstances. Insofar as they understand the human spirit more fully and subtly than any other class of men, it is because they regard it as inseparable from complex, immediate, concrete conditions. Snow mentions Thoreau as one of the writers who, faced with the prospect of the industrial revolution, let out "screams of horror" and little else. I myself have never been able to respond with much sympathy to Thoreau, though it is just the thin, abstract quality of his mind that seems to me to disqualify him from that "high class" of writers of which Snow speaks. But it was Thoreau who said (in *Resistance to Civil Government*): "I came into this world not chiefly to make it a good place to live in, but to live in it, be it good or bad." If this statement inclines to be overformulated, it does nevertheless seem to me far more suggestive and precise as a statement of the position and predicament of the intellectual, even in regard to his responsibility to the future of his society, than C. P. Snow's representation.

According to Snow, only "Ibsen in his old age" understood the industrial revolution, saw the hope along with the horror (I presume he is referring to plays like *The Master Builder*). But if one thinks of the kind of writer Snow has generally in mind, one thinks of Shelley, apostle of hope amid hideousness.

> *To suffer woes which Hope thinks infinite;*
> *To forgive wrongs darker than death or night;*
> *To defy Power, which seems omnipotent;*
> *To love, and bear; to hope till Hope creates*
> *From its own wreck the thing it contemplates. . . .*

These are splendid sentiments, but only some-

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one with Shelley's precarious hold on the actual could have written such a passage. For him—among all our important poets—ideas tended to be more palpable than anything that came to him in the shape of concrete experience. I am simplifying somewhat, but the connection between Shelley's intense, humane belief in an unrealized future and the abstractness of his relation to immediate experience cannot, I think, be denied.

Paradoxically, C. P. Snow's novels are as little abstract as one could imagine. At their most interesting, as in *The Masters,* they are the work of a skillful, matter-of-fact intelligence, and they are most convincing when they represent the work of men in committees, the debates over tactics and positions, the pulling and tugging in a fight for power. But if they seem authentic in their descriptions of the professional life, their authenticity, I'm afraid, doesn't extend to other, larger areas of experience.

Snow's censure of the retrograde attitudes of the traditional culture is correlative with his defense of the "culture" of the scientists. He states what is common knowledge, that by and large the connections of contemporary scientists "with the traditional culture . . . [are] tenuous, nothing more than a formal touch of the cap," and that *their* culture, although "in many ways an exacting and admirable one," doesn't contain much art—music being the single exception—and "of the books which to most literary persons are bread and butter, novels, history, poetry, plays, almost nothing at all." As a result, "they are self-impoverished." While they profess their interest "in the psychological or moral or social life," they also believe that "the whole literature of the traditional culture doesn't seem . . . relevant to those interests." Of course, he adds, they are dead wrong. Having said this, he goes on to establish an equivalence between the illiteracy of the scientists and the unknowingness of literary persons about science. For him the ignorance of an intellectual about the Second Law of Thermodynamics is the "scientific equivalent" of having never read a work of Shakespeare's.

Well, without offering to defend anyone's ignorance, I am still not convinced that these are deficiencies of equal gravity. Snow here reiterates the formula he originally set down in calling the scientists and the literary intellectuals two cultures, implying a kind of parity, though the former, as I have noted, seems to me to be a culture only in an anthropological sense. Indeed, Snow has, I think, confused the distinction that exists between "culture" and "a culture" (a kind of error that Raymond Williams discusses in his valuable book, *Culture and Society*), and it is partly because of such errors in discrimination that he doesn't succeed in convincing the reader that a genuine, literate discourse between scientists and literary men is possible.* Moreover, his suggestion that the only remedy is to make education less specialized may have some relevance in England, but clearly does not apply to the situation in America, where this kind of specialization is delayed longer than it is in any other country, without affecting the radical estrangement of the two groups.

The second half of the book, in which Snow considers the "Scientific Revolution," is written with much greater certitude and command, and I read this section, I must confess, in a kind of holy dread. He defines the scientific revolution as the first great change to have grown out of the industrial revolution, closely related to it, "but far more deeply scientific, far quicker, and probably far more prodigious in its result. This change comes from the application of real science to industry, no longer hit and miss, no longer the ideas of odd 'inventors,' but the real stuff." He roughly dates it as having begun some thirty or forty years ago, "when atomic particles were first made industrial use of." He says—and who can say he isn't right—that in the West virtually no one outside the scientific community truly understands what this means, and what it means for the rest of the world. The Russians seem to, however, and one of the most interesting passages of the book consists of a comparison of scientific education in Britain, the United States, and the Soviet Union. According to the latest figures, the USSR graduates each year 130,000 scientists and engineers; the United States, 65,000; the United Kingdom, 13,000. Furthermore, for some unaccountable reason, "the number of engineers graduating per year in the United States is declining fairly sharply," though Snow believes we are more likely to

* Similar issues were discussed in a series of seminars attended by scientists and men of letters held at Columbia University last year. Several of them afterwards said that the undertaking failed to establish any substantive questions or reach any kind of agreement about the possibility of meaningful discourse.

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awaken to this crisis and do something about it than are his own countrymen.

He is certain that "industrialization is the only hope for the poor." Without stopping to disagree with this statement, I will simply add to it another one of his—"It looks very different today according to whether one sees it [the industrial revolution] from Chelsea or from a village in Asia"—which transposes the argument to another dimension. The principal fact is that "the people in the industrialized countries are getting richer, and those in the non-industrialized countries are at best standing still." Today, the trick of getting rich is known, the rate of change is accelerating beyond all imagination, and we must face the facts.

> ". . . the only secret of the Russian and Chinese industrialization is that they've brought it off. That is what Asians and Africans have noticed. It took the Russians about forty years, starting with something of an industrial base—Tsarist industry wasn't negligible—but interrupted by a civil war and then the greatest war of all. The Chinese started with much less of an industrial base, but haven't been interrupted, and it looks like taking them not much over half the time. . . .
>
> "For the task of totally industrializing a major country, as in China today, it only takes will to train enough scientists and engineers and technicians. Will, and quite a small number of years."

Perhaps it takes something more than will and time alone, but Snow's notion is sufficiently clear. "It is technically possible to carry out the scientific revolution in India, Africa, Southeast Asia, Latin America, the Middle East, within fifty years . . . this is the one way out through the three menaces which stand in our way—H-bomb war, over-population, the gap between the rich and the poor. This is one of the situations where the worst crime is innocence." The question then is how is this scientific revolution to be accomplished—and by whom?

It will be done, Snow says, either by the West, "which means mainly the U.S.," or by the USSR. In any case, "the scale of the operation requires that it would have to be a national one." Private capital simply can't do it, and, he adds, "in no sense is it a fair business risk." In addition to capital, there is the requirement of trained scientists and engineers, in which respect the Russians are already a good deal ahead. For what is needed, Snow estimates, "is something like ten thousand to twenty thousand engineers from the U.S. and here to help get the thing going." These men would have to be prepared and adaptable enough "to devote themselves to a foreign country's industrialization for at least ten years of their lives."

Can this plan be brought into reality by democratic societies? The question is intractably a political one. And Snow's answer—which is the peroration of his essay—is dismayingly candid.

> "I confess . . . that I can't see the political techniques through which the good human capabilities of the West can get into action. The best one can do, and it is a poor best, is to nag away. That is perhaps too easy a palliative for one's disquiet. For, though I don't know how we can do what we need to do, or whether we shall do anything at all, I do know this: that, if we don't do it, the Communist countries will in time. They will do it at great cost to themselves and others, but they will do it. If that is how it turns out, we shall have failed, both practically and morally. At best, the West will have become an *enclave* in a different world. . . ."

These are hard lines from a man of undaunted hopefulness, who refuses to despair, one who has the future in his bones. He has not given up, of course, and has written this essay in the trust that it will help set in train the vast undertaking which he holds to be a necessary condition of our survival. And he does make some concrete proposals about education. Yet that last passage was written by a person who has also the traditional culture in his bones. Its urgency approaches to desperateness, and seems to me, indeed, to allow for an attitude something less than hopeful with regard, in any case, to political possibility.

It is beyond my competence to comment on this second part of the essay. But it seems to me one of the few discussions of genuine relevance to our present situation that I've read. It opens up for general intellectual and political argument questions which seem inevitably to get stated in special, narrow, and unpolitical terms. Despite one's reservations about any of its cultural definitions, one must hold this book in large respect. With the virtues of the traditional culture, and the special knowledge of the scientific one, C. P. Snow is eminently qualified for the task of addressing himself to the most terrible problems of our time.

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D-a-v-y Da-vy Crockett*

IRVING KRISTOL

■ There is nothing quite like American humorous writing in the literature of other nations. Nowhere else is humor so central to the literary tradition, so intimately revealing of the national experience, so representative of what the nation truly believes itself to stand for. It is not that Americans as a race are so gay or jolly. Indeed, much of this humor has little that is noticeably gay or jolly about it. There is a barely suppressed streak of hysteria and, conspicuously, an edge: more often than not the fun is at someone's expense. There is, to be sure, an undeniable vigor and exuberance that is remarkable, perhaps unique. But this signifies no mere overflowing of high spirits and good nature. If we are fond of regarding it as simply such, this is because we like the idea of deriving American humor from a special kind of candor and irreverence that have something important to do with the democratic way of life. The idea is true enough; but not in so straightforward a fashion. Behind the blithe irreverence there lies an ill-concealed aggressiveness and belligerency. American humor is certainly a distinctive expression of American democracy; yet it also expresses a historic tension within that democracy itself.

The American humorist is typically (e.g., Mark Twain, Will Rogers) the man of uncommon common sense. He is, as a result, involved at the outset in a contradiction. He is the know-nothing who outsmarts the smart-alecks. So far from being uniquely endowed or talented, he is the man who concentrates in himself the prosaic genius of ordinary humanity. He is a standing challenge to, a perpetual refutation of, the book-learned, the cosmopolitan, the distinguished, the sophisticated. For though common sense is by definition universal, there are some who—out of pride and perversity—repudiate this legacy and want to set themselves off as in some way different or superior. They are the American humorist's natural target—only, he is by nature really one of them. The man of uncommon common sense is not a common man at all, no matter how desperate his pretense. He is a born aristocrat, leading a plebeian assault against (among other things) his innermost self. The pathos of this endeavor is summed up in Mark Twain's preface to *Huckleberry Finn:* "Persons attempting to find a motive in this narrative will be prosecuted; persons attempting to find a moral in it will be banished; persons attempting to find a plot in it will be shot." What a preparation for a work of art whose motive, moral, and plot have a greater fascination than any American novel with the possible exception of *Moby Dick!* It is as if Shakespeare had forbidden us to consider *The Tempest* as anything but a musical comedy. Witnessing the case of Mark Twain, one is almost relieved that, despite the abundance of American humor, we have had only this one truly great humorist. He is so sad.

Under these circumstances, it is entirely suitable that Professor Kenneth Lynn of Harvard should have written a thoughtful and unsmiling book about American humor. It isn't that he does not see the fun; rather, he also sees through it. Besides, the truth is that the bulk of 19th-century popular American humor is not, in retrospect, so very amusing, even on the surface. There is little genuine intelligence, much vulgarity and infantile posturing:

> "Friends, fellow-citizens, brothers and sisters: Carroll is a statesman, Jackson is a hero, and Crockett is a *horse!!* Friends, fellow-citizens, brothers and sisters: they accuse me of adultery, it's a lie—I never ran away with any man's wife, that was not willing, in my life. They accuse me of gambling, it's a lie—for I always plank down the cash."

That sort of thing. If we are prompt to honor the memories of Augustus Baldwin Longstreet, Joseph B. Cobb, Joseph G. Baldwin, Johnson J. Hooper, and George Washington Harris, it is not for any pleasure we get from reading them. They may not be entirely out of mind, but they are quite out of print—deservedly so. Their importance lies beyond themselves: in their eventual radical impact on serious American writing and in their status as witnesses to a transformation of the democratic idea in America.

"Southwestern" humor is not, of course, the totality of 19th-century American humor. The "Down East" genre of salty, Yankee, clever-rube raillery was always popular. But it is fair enough to say that the American funnyman is above all

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* A review of *Mark Twain and Southwestern Humor,* by Kenneth S. Lynn; Atlantic-Little Brown, 300 pp., $5.00.

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a picturesque and earthy character whose mother-wit is the tongue of Mother Nature herself, and that he received his most perfect incarnation in the figure (both real and legendary) of Davy Crockett. It was Davy and his successors who set the tone. And a very subversive tone it was—subversive, not of democracy itself, but of the particular Whig conception of democracy that dominated American national politics between Washington and Jackson, that dominated Southern politics until the Civil War, and that dominated American letters until the turn of the century. This Whiggery has, on the whole, had a bad press. Our textbooks denigrate it as a kind of "feudal" and "aristocratic" hangover from the European past, emphasizing as it did that self-government, so far from being identical with good government, had to be reconciled with it; and asserting that, to this end, political and cultural authority should be located in the hands of the well educated and the well born. This denigration is a little less than just. Even Jefferson, after all, saw democracy as a system governed by a "natural aristocracy of talent," not as a system capable of being governed indiscriminately by everyone. This latter was the sovereign ideal of Jacksonian democracy, with its fervent egalitarianism, insistent camaraderie, and its demand for "rotation in office." Its victory was so complete that today we almost automatically identify the spirit of Jacksonian democracy with the spirit of democracy itself.

In the 1820's, Davy Crockett—illiterate Congressman, indomitable warrior, incredible braggart, and quintessential Jacksonian—projected frontier humor onto the national scene. By the time he broke with Jackson, for personal reasons, even the Whigs were his cynical converts. They claimed him as their own red-blooded, 100 per cent typical American, and brought in Eastern ghost writers when his powers began to fail. The Whig "capture" of Davy Crockett was a preliminary to their capture of the new democratic image in the campaign of 1840, when the patrician Harrison was endowed with a mythical log cabin and jug of hard cider, while the luckless Van Buren was vilified for dining off (equally mythical) gold plate. The Whigs won; and traditional Whiggery as a national political force was dead.

The evolution of the Southwest humorous tradition as a whole led to exactly the same result; and this is the tale Professor Lynn tells wisely and well. The Southwest humorists were themselves all Whig gentlemen of the old school—professional men mainly, active in politics, Southern patriots, contemners of Jacksonianism (especially after the Nullification Crisis of 1832). All their entertaining stories had a narrator whose own Addisonian prose, spiced with anti-Jacksonian polemics, provided a "frame" for the vernacular attributed to their comic characters. But the spirit of the age was not to be denied: slowly the vernacular encroached on the "frame," became more and more the prose of the narrative itself. And slowly the distance between the narrator and his subject diminished, until the comic character was in effect the hero. The motto of Johnson Hooper's "Simon Suggs"—"It is good to be shifty in a new country"—from having been an awful example would become a flippant moral. The culmination of this process was to arrive decades later with the appearance of *Huckleberry Finn*, the first American novel to be composed entirely in the vernacular and, according to Hemingway, who should know, the inspiration of the modern American literary tradition.

That Twain was aware of the stylistic revolution he was engaged in can be seen from his statement: "The humorous story is American, the comic story is English, the witty story is French. The humorous story depends for its effect upon the *manner* of telling; the comic and the witty story upon the matter." (His italics.) He was, as Professor Lynn makes clear, a reluctant revolutionary. Himself from an old Whig family, Twain was never at his ease in the new equalitarian and acquisitive American democracy, though this democracy clasped him to its bosom as its most beloved son. He attacked the jury system and universal suffrage, incessantly derided Poor Richard's Almanac and all it stood for, dreamed of himself as a mob-defying leader. At the same time, of course, he was a technological enthusiast (he congratulated Whitman on his seventieth birthday for living in an age that knew coal tar) and a crude American nativist. He was pulled in all directions until, at the end, he could feel little but pain and bleak despair. ("Nothing exists save empty space—and you," he has his Mysterious Stranger say.) But his literary direction was unequivocal. In the first story that made him famous, "The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County," the narrator, "Mark Twain," provides the old gentlemanly "frame" for the anecdote—and it is this narrator who turns out to be the butt of the joke. Immediately there-

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after he fused the Whig-narrator and plebeian-protagonist into a single literary *persona*—the first "unliterary" American writer worthy of the name.

The triumph of the vernacular over the trans-Atlantic rhetoric of the genteel tradition was a momentous event in American letters, American politics, American culture. It meant the victory of the masculine tone in the novel, hitherto regarded as a feminine entertainment—the way was open for Stephen Crane, Dreiser, and Sherwood Anderson. It meant the final discrediting of the Whig-constitutional view of democracy, with its solemn (even mournful) emphasis on individual obligation and public morality—to an extent where it has become almost impossible to state this point of view without appearing to parody it. And, culturally, it meant a death blow to what Ezra Pound was soon to deride as "Kulchur"—that narrow but loyal dedication to "elevated standards" and "good taste" which the New England Brahmins exemplified, and which in their case had retained little enough connection with either artistic creation or public affairs. The flood-gates were opened, and all those subterranean activities to which we give the title of "popular culture," and to which American humorists stand as founding fathers, raced to achieve respectability and to form a more perfect union with the democratic ethos.

Doubtless it was all inevitable. But that it was *all* to the good, is less obvious or certain. Without Mark Twain, no Hemingway. Without George Washington Harris, no Faulkner. Without "Nimrod Wildfire," no Superman or Dick Tracy. Without P. T. Barnum, no Charles Van Doren. Without Davy Crockett—the very thought is beyond the allowable limits of the American democratic imagination, of which he is both the creature and the creator.

Document of Non-Dialogue

UP FROM LIBERALISM. By WILLIAM F. BUCKLEY, JR. McDowell, Obolensky. 205 pp. $3.50.

Reviewed by MURRAY KEMPTON

THERE are two possible tones whose employment toward William F. Buckley fits the fashion. One is the tone of hostility, by now a shade *passé* but still being worn in some college towns and other provincial places. The other is one of detachment tending toward amused tolerance. If I could muster it, I should prefer hostility to the newer mode.

To discuss Buckley's work in tones of critical detachment would be to suggest a confidence that he is failing in his responsibilities to society and that I am succeeding in mine. The worst thing I could say about Buckley is that he is not Gilbert Keith Chesterton. But, when I think that, there immediately arises the reflection that I am not George Bernard Shaw—a reflection unrelieved by the consolation that no one else is George Bernard Shaw either. Since every man is his personal sun and every friend a satellite, I am left feeling sorrier for myself than I am about Buckley.

I never think of Buckley without affection and rarely do I think of him without a cloudy memory of one of the Winston Churchill anecdotes. Mr. Churchill was sitting through an especially tedious speech in the House when his eye fell upon an elder member who leaned forward holding up his ear trumpet, the better to hear the speaker. "And who," Mr. Churchill asked, "is that fool disregarding his natural advantages?"

I do not here think of those natural advantages with whose possession Buckley is most generally associated. One of those, his skill at debate, seems to me, when indulged, a serious disability, diverting him from the reality of human existence. I might equate it, as a personal danger, with Arthur Schlesinger, Jr.'s talent for composing political speeches for his inferiors. In both cases, the exercise of a superficial skill results in contamination of private feeling by official rhetoric and a turning of public self into caricature of private self.

Buckley has thus become one more casualty of our society's policy of functioning without serious dialogue. Westbrook Pegler once described the syndicated newspaper column as a piece of packaged goods. The public Buckley, in deference to public custom, has endured the same process.

Our society's most conspicuous substitute for dialogue is the television panel, where Buckley represents one side of public opinion, packaged and categorized as the Hard Right. His function on these occasions is to be told by his opponent—to the politely concealed satisfaction of the moderator—that he is no true conservative. This, of course, is no dialogue at all but a species of entertainment of a peculiarly empty sort. When Mrs. Trollope came to America in 1828, she was able to attend a series of public

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debates—in Cincinnati no less—between Robert Owen and the Reverend Alexander Campbell. Their subject: "The truth and falsehood of all the religions that have ever been propagated on the face of the earth." We are fortunate these days if the subject of a public discussion is the length of a fingernail wider than: "Whom shall we choose—Wayne Morse or Claire Boothe Luce?"

We do not dare debate God; we accept the profit system. We do not even argue in any lively sense whether our country can properly threaten the murder of thousands of unarmed children as a technique of national defense. By common consent we have thrown out of our dialogue these questions which have engaged every century but this one and every country but our own. And, without them, what is left to men to argue about? We did have a debate of sorts about Senator McCarthy; but, when many people were listening, the argument never arose about the level of who was a more effective anti-Communist, McCarthy or Truman.

I cannot, then, blame Buckley for the narrow range and the transient character of this, his newest book. It is, in its way, better than most tracts of the sort, since it is rather more entertaining. But I leave it with a sense that, while I am always glad to hear from Buckley, he is a friend who left too long ago on a trip across a desert, and the landscapes he describes are very like the ones he reported in his last letter.

Yet it still seems that Buckley's natural advantages—even though they can hardly escape eventual damage—fit him for some higher function. He has passion, he has a restive intelligence; and he is an outsider, being both a Catholic and a young man of independent means, who is at once free from the compulsion to operate a business and the itch to run for office. I should say therefore that he is the repository of values insufficiently attended in an America which has come to believe that all social and spiritual development can be covered without any reference outside Freud, Marx, Henry Ford, the Reverend Daniel Poling, and Edward L. Bernays—that, in a word, the 20th century destroyed all previous values.

Buckley would deny with passion that he accepts this notion of the universe. Yet he's so conditioned to the rules of the game that he plays it as though there was no century before our own and thus no tradition worth defending. He is not a man widely credited with sportsmanship; yet which of his enemies could claim a single act so gallant as this immense forfeiture?

I hesitate to tax Buckley with the accustomed complaint that he is not a true conservative; yet I think I must have a go at it in this case because it seems to me relevant to his difficulty. I am afraid that there has never been a serious body of conservative thought in America, although the reason for its absence by no means precludes the possibility of its developing tomorrow. The original disability was the acceptance of Jeremy Bentham. The American debate, with a few lonely exceptions, is cursed with utilitarianism.

I am thus surprised and not a little depressed at how much space Buckley devotes to economic exposition. I pay him the compliment of fervent fellow feeling when I say that this science is not quite his *métier*. Buckley examines at length and finally accepts the social security system as no longer an issue of practical controversy. He offers only the objection that it is compulsory, and "that compulsory participation in any enterprise is wrong, for human freedom is diminished." This, I think, is a proposition with which I would have trouble quarreling.

But we live, as a fact of our lives, under a system of state capitalism and thus a state increasingly rigorous. One of Joe McCarthy's continuing quarrels with two presidents of the United States, for example, was over the right of the Executive to keep secrets from Congress and thus from the voter. Liberal public opinion vigorously supported the Executive in this struggle. Vice President Nixon's 1956 attitude toward those who would end hydrogen bomb tests and his 1959 attitude toward those who would resume them indicates that the man most likely to be our next president believes that certain matters—the most critical ones imaginable—are reserved to the decision of the president alone.

Compulsory social security is only one of that Executive's demands upon us. Has the state the right to ban *Fanny Hill* and clear *Lady Chatterley's Lover?* Has J. Edgar Hoover the right to refuse a defendant in a security case his chance to cross-examine the main witness against him? Can a secular state take the vengeance of God on a murderer? Can a Congressional committee conduct a state trial of and exact a public confession from a musician who may have belonged to the Communist party? I should suspect that Buckley's answers to these questions would differ from my own. Yet, because he is a serious man, I think that

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he would struggle with them painfully, and I should then be confronted with the work of someone who had, in Yeats's phrase, been sleeping on a bare board. Yet how much Buckley sacrifices when he accepts the terms of a debate so dismally confined to the practical!

This is a book not without value even though it be only journalistic. Buckley has undertaken to quarrel with the Liberal Establishment, and narrow as the terms of his quarrel are in practice—it can frequently be reduced to "you're another"—the result is that he has set down examples of the condition of the dialogue in America which I am sure will be preserved nowhere else. Without Buckley, we should never have had the full text of the advertisement issued by the Committee for an Effective Congress which was labeled, "An Appeal for Clean Politics" and was an appeal, as God is our judge, for funds for Senator Wayne Morse. And there can hardly exist outside the *Congressional Record* the opening paragraph of Senator Fulbright's assault on George Sokolsky, an abuse of Congressional immunity that would make Agnes E. Meyer weep. There is also an extended exposition of the adventures of Paul Hughes, who sold a group of ordinarily sensible citizens what purported to be espionage reports from inside the McCarthy committee. A friend of mine was saying the other day that the 50's was also the decade when a group of reasonable Americans believed that Joe McCarthy was stacking arms in the bowels of the Senate Office Building. That part of the 50's is recorded for popular consumption only here.

It is no proper answer to Mr. Buckley that he mourns the fall of Joe McCarthy, who did all these things, too. The proper answer is that we are most of us sick with a double standard of morality. The desert fathers would have a thing or two to say about it, and I wish that Mr. Buckley, who has them, after all, in his stable, would call them as witness for himself and us.

Hebrew and Greek

HELLENISTIC CULTURE: Fusion and Diffusion. By MOSES HADAS. Columbia University Press. 324 pp. $6.00.

Reviewed by ROBERT GRAVES

WHEN doubt in the literal truth of the Scriptures first seriously struck our universities, peace was kept by a tacit agreement between leaders of the theology and classics faculties not to trespass on each other's Tom Tiddler's grounds. As a result, sacred history has tended to be a small backward sovereign state, an enclave in the great world of profane history. Thus Gospel accounts of Jesus' trial were never critically examined by experts on the Roman administration of Palestine and on the rules of procedure obtaining in native Jewish courts. They might know well enough that the story makes no sort of historical sense, but to say so publicly would cause a deal of unpleasantness in the Senior Common Room; and though the New Testament was considered more sacred than the Old, the theologian was allowed to misrepresent even pre-Christian Jewish history without contradiction, and in the face of all epigraphic evidence. The grateful theologian allows classical scholars to praise the pagan glory of Rome and Athens without rebuking them for a fall from grace.

THIS polite rift between two worlds of thought has been perpetuated by the modern specializing tendency. To be rated a first-class Greek and Latin scholar (which demands close acquaintance with monographs in German, French, English, and Italian) rules out a similar eminence in such Oriental languages as Hebrew, Aramaic, Coptic, and Syriac, let alone Assyrian and Ugarit. Until comparatively recent times, the Oriental field remained a private preserve of the theologian, whether Jew or Christian. And Jewish theologians took care to display as little interest as possible in Western beliefs and records: a tradition dating from the bad old days after the destruction of the Temple, when the only means of preventing Judaism being swallowed up by rival faiths was formally to ban the study of Greek. Most university scholars are still therefore so blinded to the close connection between Oriental and Occidental literatures that they jump as one man on any outsider who claims that he has found, say, Greek elements in Genesis, or Hebrew elements in the Latin classics.

As a well-jumped-upon outsider, I rejoice if ever an eminent university professor—miraculously at home both among the classics and rabbinical texts—breaks academic convention and boldly bridges ancient gaps of knowledge. Here is Professor Moses Hadas daring to write, for example:

> "The one rebellion which has been recorded in history as directed against hel-

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> lenism, that of the Maccabees in Judaea, was not, in its origin, a reaction against hellenism. From the contemporary or almost contemporary account in I and II Maccabees it is clear that hellenism had proceeded very far indeed, and apparently without protest, before the insurrection began. Violence started in consequence of rivalry between equally hellenized contenders for the high priesthood, and religion was not an issue. The standard of religion was raised in the countryside, and then served to rally the people to the cause. It was only after religion had become the battle cry of the rebels that Antiochus IV issued his decrees against the observance of central religious rites, and it is highly significant that, as soon as the anti-religious decrees were rescinded, the pietist group withdrew from the fighting. The object of the Hasmonaean rulers was not to protect religion —their bitterest opponents were pietists— but to maintain a sovereignty which should be able to hold its head up among others which were being carved out of the weakened Seleucid empire."

And Professor Hadas bluntly insists that Christian church dogma is securely based not, as it professes, on the Aramaic teachings of Jesus, but on the Greek philosophical works of Philo, and hence on Plato.

Though having myself noted Western mythic elements in the *Canticles*, I was unaware hitherto that this collection of erotic marriage songs should be dated from the Hellenistic period. It contains Greek borrowings—*appiryon* for *phoreion* (bedstead), and *pardes* for *paradeisos* (park)—and can be associated with the Homeric *Hymn to Demeter*, Theocritus' *Idylls* and Longus' *Daphnis and Chloe*. This happily breaks down another barrier.

That the Gospels were transformed from simple collections of Jesus' apocalyptic comments on the Hebrew Scriptures into a Greek *aretalogy* (narrative eulogy), on the lines of Philostratus' *Life of Apollonius of Tyana*, I knew; but not that the Eleazer-Antiochus dialogue in the Fourth Book of Maccabees was based on the Calanus-Alexander dialogue in Philo's *Quod Omnis Probus Liber*, and therefore on the Socrates-Callicles dialogue in Plato's *Gorgias*.

Culture was exported alike from West to East and from East to West. Classical scholars are reminded by Professor Hadas that not only did Virgil draw upon Isaiah, at second hand through the Greco-Jewish *Sibylline Oracles*, but that Tibullus and Horace used the same source. And that the Palestinian Philodemus of Gadara, whose home language will have been Aramaic, contributed erotic verse to the *Greek Anthology*, knew the poets Virgil, Horace, and Varius, and influenced Catullus, Horace, Ovid, and Martial. Philodemus formed an important bridge between East and West.

Virgil's knowledge of Biblical literature was more limited than Horace's. Horace knew the Septuagint translation of the Bible well, and his works have closer analogies with Hebrew literature than any previous Latin poet's. He is even suspected of having had a Jewish mother. But Horace was less deeply affected than Virgil—whose *Aeneid* deviates from the epic model of Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* (while borrowing copiously from both) in celebrating a near-Jewish mission of national destiny.

> ". . . Virgil's use of a hero and pattern unexampled in antecedent pagan literature but very like the story of Moses, combined with the apocalyptic technique which looks forward to a kind of salvation, suggests Scriptural influence. . . . Livy's history, which had been called own sister to Virgil's *Aeneid*, starts with the same premises and moves to the same goal. In many details, as in its over-all effect, it is much closer to the historical books of the Old Testament than to Herodotus or Thucydides. . . . Livy's Romans are in the natural order of things children of destiny, lords of creation, fated to prevail over all other peoples.
>
> ". . . Camillus, who is the voice incarnate of Roman Idealism, is made to say [of the Gallic invasion] (*Livy* 5.51.8): 'Conquered, captured, and redeemed, we were punished so severely by gods and men that we might serve as an example to the whole world.' This is not very different from the concept of Assyria as the rod of Jehovah's anger and the staff in their hand as his indignation against the backsliding children of Israel (Isaiah 10:5), or of the Canaanites being left in Palestine after the conquest to prove Israel (Judges 3:1)."

Another Easterner of paramount importance to Western literature was the Syrian stoic, Poseidonius of Apamea, who glorifies the will of God and applauds Moses for leading the Jews to Canaan "when disgusted by the Egyptian por-

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trayal of gods in animal form." Lucretius, Virgil, Seneca, and Pliny borrowed from Poseidonius, as the authors of The Wisdom of Solomon and Fourth Maccabees had also done. To pinpoint these influences needs a mind which arranges its facts not merely according to chronology and nationality, but according to *pattern*. Anyone, of course, can deny such correspondences as accidental. The same patterns, whether of art or literature, *may* occur spontaneously in distant countries without contact. Yet I think it wiser to assume cultural contact where this is geographically possible; and Professor Hadas's findings carry conviction. It is arguable whether the Genesis story of Joseph and Potiphar's wife has been borrowed from Euripides' *Phaedra*, as he claims, or whether *Phaedra*, like several other myths concerned with the Corinthian Isthmus, derives from Palestinian sources, and these from the Egyptian *Tale of Two Brothers*. Similarly, though Lucian's *True History* account of his hero's adventures with the whale is perhaps borrowed from the Hellenistic Book of Jonah, Jonah has earlier counterparts: both in Babylon, where the god Marduk fought his way out of Tiamat's monstrous maw, and in Italy, where an Etruscan mirror shows Jason spewed up by Leviathan, just as Jonah was. But these points need not detain us: double borrowings only emphasize the interdependence of East and West.

The Sabbatean Movement

SABBATAI ZEVI. By GERSHOM SCHOLEM. Am Oved (Tel Aviv). 2 vols.

Reviewed by MATI MEGED

NOTHING in the history of the Jewish diaspora can be compared with the Sabbatean movement for depth of spiritual influence and psychological impact. On New Year's day of 1665, a relatively obscure Sephardic Jew named Sabbatai Zevi proclaimed himself the Messiah in the synagogue of his native Smyrna, and within a few short months the word had spread not only throughout every Jewish community in Europe but into Africa, the Arabian desert, and Babylonia. Rabbis and laymen, rich and poor, the learned and the illiterate, accepted Sabbatai Zevi's claim, and even his subsequent conversion to Islam (in 1666) failed to shake many of his followers, who continued to believe in him and to await his re-appearance. What was the secret of the amazing growth and tenacity of this movement? What accounted for the universality of its appeal when so many other religious and social movements—including messianic ones—were able to succeed in stirring only a relatively small fraction of the Jewish world? More than one hundred fifty books—histories, novels, biographies, and plays—have been written in an attempt to cope with these questions, but it was not until the recent appearance in Israel of Professor Gershom Scholem's two masterly volumes that anything like an adequate answer began to be provided. These two volumes, written in Hebrew and unfortunately still not available in English, carry the story up to the death of Sabbatai Zevi (1676); they will be followed by others covering the subsequent history of the movement.

Scholem, one of the great scholars of modern times and the foremost living authority on Jewish mysticism, brings a unique combination of gifts to this work. Not only is he thoroughly expert in the literature and history of Cabbalism—an indispensable requirement for understanding Sabbateanism—but he has spent some twenty years collecting and interpreting new manuscript material from all over the world in an effort to build up as full and accurate a picture as possible of Sabbateanism in all its many ramifications. Beyond that, however, he is equipped with the psychological insight of a first-rate novelist, which has enabled him to deal sensitively with the fantastic personality of Sabbatai Zevi himself and imagine the state of mind and soul which led so large a number of his contemporaries to accept his messianic pretensions. All this serves to deepen Scholem's account of the movement, while infusing his book with dramatic force.

SCHOLEM rejects the generally accepted view of Sabbateanism as an expression of the yearning for salvation among the poor and illiterate, and he denies that it had any vital connection with the Heidamak pogroms of 1648–49. He adduces a wealth of evidence to show that Sabbateanism recruited followers from all classes of Jewry, and that its chief fortresses were rich and flourishing communities like those of Amsterdam and Salonica. Moreover, he demonstrates that Sabbatai Zevi's main followers never suffered from the Haidamak pogroms: the real beginnings of the movement were in places untouched by events of that kind. If Scholem devotes so much energy to exposing the inadequacy of any soci-

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ological or economic interpretation of Sabbateanism it is becase he is intent on accepting religious and mystical experience as an independent and finally irreducible historical force. Thus, he locates the "cause" of the movement not in political or social factors but in the slowly germinating influence of the Lurianic Cabbala, whose doctrines and symbols had penetrated deeply into the soul of 17th-century Jewry, preparing it both intellectually and spiritually for the advent of a Messiah.

The advantage of Scholem's emphasis on religious origins is that it helps to illuminate the specific character of Sabbateanism in a more detailed and precise way than has ever before been done, for a large part of the language and imagery of the movement (as he so richly reveals) derive ultimately from the Lurianic Cabbala. It goes without saying that even Scholem cannot solve all the riddles of Sabbateanism—why, for example, did a messianic impulse formed and nurtured by the study of Cabbala arise in Turkey rather than Italy, where the Cabbala was much better known? But it is one of his main premises of this book that an element of mystery always surrounds the ways of the human spirit; as I have noted, what chiefly concerns Scholem here is to establish the primacy of religious factors in the birth and development of Sabbateanism and to determine its true significance within Jewish history.

Perhaps the main impression we get from Scholem's account is that Sabbateanism succeeded because, at a time when the hold of tradition over the Jews was just beginning to weaken, the leaders of the movement were daring enough to appeal directly to the yearning for liberation from history which is implicit in the very centers of Jewish thought. Both the Rabbinical tradition, stemming from the Talmud and the mystical tradition stemming from the Cabbala regarded the coming of the Messiah precisely as an interpretation of the historical process, a sudden act of fulfillment that would bring history to an end and usher in a new age and a wholly new way of life. But the Rabbis believed that man himself could do nothing to hasten this coming; he could only wait in hope for God to redeem the world in His own good time and in his own way. The Cabbala, on the other hand, taught that human effort *could* bring the day of salvation nearer, but it conceived of this effort as so complicated and difficult that the final result was an attitude hardly less pessimistic than that of the Talmud.* It was into such a context of hopelessness that Sabbateanism erupted, declaring to the skeptical that liberation from the onerous burden of history was not a mere illusion or an expectation for the future, but a present reality brought about by the appearance of the Messiah. A new law had come into the world to supersede the Torah and it was therefore no longer necessary for the Jews to observe the 613 commandments. What, then, did they have to observe? The answer is nothing; the new law demanded no concrete act of its followers. To the extent that it came to be formulated at all, its main purpose was to prove that the Sabbateans had already been liberated from the ordinary restrictions of the human condition—and more particularly from those which applied only to Jews. The Sabbateans, then, were not very different in their behavior from the pneumatic sects of other nations and other times (including certain early Christian groups). What distinguished them was the specific character of the imaginary world they constructed for themselves—that is, their mythology.

As has already been indicated, this mythology came from the Lurianic Cabbala, but Sabbatai Zevi and Nathan of Gaza (who was, as Scholem has proved, the real prophet and leader of the movement) used it in a new and revolutionary way—to express and justify the deep, ancient, elementary impulse of man to idolize himself, to become God. Almost any mythological conception of the universe can be turned to such uses, for by embracing myth man ceases to grasp his existence as a developing process (i.e. a history) and can then begin to believe in the possibility of the man-god, a thoroughly free being bound by no laws save the dictates of his own will. And in the Cabbala the Sabbateans found a particularly rich mythological treasure to mine. They were able to elaborate compelling rationalizations for their assertion that the reign of the Torah had come to an end. No practical demands had to be made of the followers: they had only to believe in Sabbatai Zevi as an incarnation of one of the *Sephirot* and to experience the ecstasy of his advent in order to liberate themselves from the yoke of the old laws (especially those pertaining to sex).

In support of his contention that the Sabbatean movement was an integral part of Juda-

* The English reader can consult Scholem's article "Jewish Messianism and the Idea of Progress" in the April 1958 COMMENTARY for a discussion of these points.

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ism, then, Scholem can point to its psychological and spiritual foundations as well as to its symbolic and mythological expression. But neither does Scholem deny that Sabbateanism represented the first great impulse of the diaspora Jew to break with traditional Judaism without casting off his Jewish identity. It can be said, indeed, that the Sabbateans were struggling to define a new conception of what it meant to be a Jew—even after his conversion Sabbatai Zevi seems to have regarded himself as still a Jew, as did those of his followers who continued to believe in him. But were they Jews, and if so, in what sense? This is finally the most intriguing of all the questions raised by the Sabbatean movement, for it involves us not only in a delicate aspect of the movement itself but in speculations on the nature of Jewish identity.

Scholem does not engage in such speculations in those two volumes, though it is hard to see how he will be able to avoid them in dealing with the later history of Sabbateanism. Nor does he touch more than lightly on several other aspects of the subject that also involve speculative considerations. What, for example, causes a whole people to turn so dramatically and explosively to myth? Is this impulse the creature of certain historical situations, or is it a fixed element in the human soul that constantly seeks for an opportunity to burst forth? We should also like to know something more about the general psychological significance of the language of Sabbateanism: do its roots perhaps strike deeper than the Cabbala and into the soil of older and more universal myths? And what of the fantastic attempt of a historical movement to achieve the absolute *within* the boundaries of the human condition—is this also a fixed spiritual need that can be unleashed at almost any time? It is among the virtues of Scholem's great book that it forces us to dwell on such matters—to ask questions that he himself omits to ask, and to feel that we have been carried close to the outer limits of the knowable.

Cold War Journalism

THE MILITARY AND INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION OF OUR TIME. By FRITZ STERNBERG. Praeger. 353 pp. $5.75.

Reviewed by GEORGE LICHTHEIM

IT CANNOT be said with complete assurance that this is the worst book yet published on the

S
Jewish and Protestant views of
American Catholics
The Catholic Church in America as it looks to leading non-Catholic spokesmen
ROBERT McAFEE BROWN
ARTHUR COHEN
MARTIN MARTY
RABBI ARTHUR GILBERT
ALLYN ROBINSON
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With an Afterword by
GUSTAVE WEIGEL, S.J.
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subject of the cold war, since there are also the writings of Isaac Deutscher. But though the palm may elude his grasp, Dr. Sternberg runs Mr. Deutscher a close second; witness the following quotations, which are chosen at random and could easily be multiplied:

"The military revolution of our time is moving forward parallel with the second industrial revolution; in fact it was the military revolution which originally launched the industrial revolution."

"The Asiatic revolutions have this in common with both the French and Russian revolutions: that they are taking place in primarily agricultural countries and that they aim at abolishing feudalism."

"The West should assist China in carrying out her Five-Year plans too, and of course without political strings. China should not be expected to cease to be a Communist State in return for economic aid."

There are some 350 pages of this kind of thing, liberally interspersed with statistics culled from newspaper articles, comments on Senatorial hearings, and learned references to "a well-informed article published in the *New Statesman*" on the subject of Soviet education, from which it appears that there are more science students in Russia than elsewhere. The whole is held together by the author's insistence that we are living in the midst of a global revolution—by now hardly an original thesis—and that something should be done about it. The something that needs to be done turns out to be—guess what? Right, aid to backward countries. For "over a thousand million people live in China, India, and Pakistan alone. And of this thousand million people the vast majority . . . live in crushing poverty of a kind beyond the grasp of people in the United States and Western Europe." Moreover, as we have seen, they are saddled with "feudalism" (which does not exist, and never did exist, in any Asian country except Japan: by a curious coincidence also the only Asian country which has successfully industrialized without recourse to despotism).

This state of affairs is not only alarming in itself, but to make matters worse "It is taking place in a period of world history." The meaning of this statement is a little obscure, to say no more. Has there ever been a time which was not "a period of world history"?

"It is taking place parallel with the second industrial revolution." It used to be the fashion to distinguish between the "first" industrial revolution—that based on coal—and the "second," which was supposed to have been inaugurated in the 1890's by the internal combustion machine and the widespread application of new forms of energy; so that if atomic energy has inaugurated a new wave, it must be the third. For Dr. Sternberg, however, everything that happened before 1945 is pre-history. He will have it that the present state of affairs represents a complete break with the past.

It will be evident from these random citations that the work under review falls short of its proclaimed goal. Apart from being very largely a scissors-and-paste job, it suffers from intellectual incoherence and a marked disposition to simplify complex problems until they become unrecognizable. In particular, it does not seem to have occurred to Dr. Sternberg to question his dogma that "feudalism"—let us call it land ownership, to eliminate the worst confusion—is at the bottom of the trouble in the undeveloped countries. Leaving aside their inheritance—which includes such factors as soil erosion, overpopulation, and regressive cultural traits—these countries may be said to be facing a problem that becomes the more difficult to solve the more the peasants are placed in control of the very meager surplus available for investment: the problem, namely, where the funds for industrialization are to come from, if they are not to be taken out of the hides of these same peasants. This was the dilemma which drove the Russian revolution into the Stalinist impasse. Dr. Sternberg, who started his political career many years ago as an unorthodox Socialist, has retained enough interest in economics to recognize this difficulty, but sees an easy solution in the availability of foreign economic aid to make up the balance. "Without such foreign support Nehru's democratic regime is not viable." But no amount of foreign assistance can take the place of those savings which *must* come out of the Indian peasant economy if modernization is to go forward. And even if this particular circle could be squared by injections of foreign aid on a scale larger than anything yet contemplated, the problem would be only half solved, as long as India has China for a neighbor (and Pakistan for a rival and "hereditary enemy").

"We are still far too much caught up in our old idea of regarding the Asiatic countries as only semi-independent. This is no longer the case today; they are already independent, and in the future they will be even more so." The

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concept of a country that is not merely independent, but "even more so," seems a bit puzzling at first, but on reflection one sees what the author is after: it is a fact that the Asian countries have not only emancipated themselves from their former tutors, but are in some cases beginning to overshadow them. One aspect of this process is a distant lowering in the intellectual level of debate concerning their problems. The work under review testifies to this recent trend. It may be a good thing that popular journalism should busy itself with the subject of "the revolution of our time," but simplification can be carried too far.

The Snopeses at an End

THE MANSION. By WILLIAM FAULKNER. Random House. 436 pp. $4.75.

Reviewed by RICHARD CHASE

AS FAULKNER tells us in a prefatory note to *The Mansion,* the book is the "final chapter of, and the summation of, a work conceived and begun in 1925." In this new book we presumably see the last of the famous Snopes tribe, whose earlier activities were chronicled in *The Hamlet* and *The Town* and whose name has become synonymous with mean-minded, small-time commercialism, provincial conniving in and out of politics, and general skullduggery. There is no other such sustained trilogy dealing with small-town life in America; it is, of course, a major achievement and constitutes a large portion of Faulkner's general portrait of his mythic but very real Yoknapatawpha County and its town of Jefferson.

Like much of Faulkner's work, the Snopes trilogy is uneven. *The Hamlet,* published in 1940, remains the strongest and richest of the three novels (although "novels" is not quite the word for them). Reading *The Town* (1957) one was uncomfortably aware of the author borrowing events, characters, and tricks of language from his own earlier books without quite being able to give them a new vitality. On some pages one feels the same way about *The Mansion,* but this book is a better one than its predecessor and makes a fitting conclusion to what scholars will doubtless be calling the Snopes cycle.

They are certainly a picturesque group. Flem, who progresses from grocery clerk to bank president, is the sexually impotent Menelaus of the

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clan. He is murdered at the end of the new book by Mink Snopes, who waits thirty-eight years in prison to track down his hated relative and shoot him. This he finally accomplishes in a vivid scene in the one room Flem ever uses of the spacious mansion he has pretentiously remodeled in the antebellum style. The Helen of the story is Eula Varner, whose lush femaleness and beauty drive quixotic sentimentalists like Gavin Stevens, the local lawyer, to despair and on whose sexual infidelities Flem trades himself into wealth and respectability, dispossessing her aristocratic lover Manfred De Spain not only from the bank presidency but from his mansion too. But she had committed suicide in *The Town,* and the main woman character in the new book is her daughter Linda. Then there are I. O. Snopes, Watkins Products Snopes, the carpenter, Virgil Snopes, of the prodigious sexual performances, Senator Clarence Snopes, Montgomery Ward Snopes, the purveyor of lewd photographs, and several others who constitute what thoughtful people like Stevens and his friend V. K. Ratliff sardonically refer to as "the Snopes condition or dilemma."

THIS condition set in when the Snopeses, descendants of carpetbaggers who came south after the Civil War, began about the turn of the century to displace the earlier settlers, like the Varners, from their positions of local power and prestige. This they gradually accomplished by trickery, suborning, and sheer persistence. And by the time Faulkner comes to the end of his chronicle he has produced not only a series of colorful and humorous stories but also something of a historical and sociological commentary. There is documentary value, for example, in the account in *The Mansion* of the rise of Clarence Snopes, a small-time Huey Long, Vardaman, or Bilbo, from local constable to state senator. He began by brandishing the racist slogans of the Ku Klux Klan, made himself newly popular by doing an about-face and attacking the Klan in the guise of a humanitarian reformer, and later, as expediency dictated, joined the fascist Silver Shirts. Faulkner appears to think that the Southern demagogue can never be beaten by liberal idealism or political action. This is shown not only by the bafflement Stevens and Ratliff feel when confronted with the political aspect of the Snopes "dilemma" but by the fact that the defeat of Clarence Snopes is brought about in a purely farcical manner.

That the Snopes chronicle is a significant social commentary is all the more remarkable because the three books of the trilogy are really collections of related fables rather than novels, and they tend to make scant use of the novelist's ways of giving his narratives a detailed social content. There is sometimes very little psychological content either, and as usually happens in Faulkner some of the leading characters in *The Mansion* are not really portrayed or presented. Instead they are alluded to or described remotely in words that become a mere repeated formula, as in the case of Flem Snopes. Or they are used as a temporary point of view or narrator but not accounted for otherwise, as in the case of Chick Mallison. On the other hand, there are several characters whom readers will remember from earlier stories who achieve a new reality and interest in *The Mansion,* like Gavin Stevens, Ratliff, Linda Snopes, and Mink.

The Mansion is loosely constructed around the story of Mink Snopes and his long planned revenge. In *The Hamlet* one reads how he killed Jack Houston in an argument over a cow and vowed revenge on Flem when Flem failed to come to his defense during the trial. All this is amplified in the new book, and we are told how, with the help of Montgomery Ward Snopes, Flem tricks Mink into an attempted escape from jail in order to lengthen his term. In the long sections devoted to Mink, Faulkner is at his best. They are so fine that we do not worry about the fact that in the portraits of the tall convict in *Old Man* and of Joe Christmas in *Light in August* he had told basically the same story of fortitude, masculine isolation, endurance, and "outrage" at the cruelty and irrationality of nature and society. Nor do we worry much about the note of sentimentality (Mink's physical resemblance to a child) that creeps in here and there.

Ratliff's eloquent flow of salty, semiliterate talk and his sardonic humor are a delight as always, and he makes the perfect Sancho Panza to Stevens' Don Quixote. Stevens himself is more alive and attractive here than he was, for example, in *Intruder in the Dust,* where he was not much more than a mouthpiece for Dixiecrat ideas on the race question. We learn anew in *The Mansion* of his charming if more than slightly neurotic impulse to be gallant to adolescent girls (lending them books of poetry and buying them ice cream sodas) and about his doomed love first for Eula Varner and then for Linda, although readers of *The Town* will find

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some of this unduly repetitious. There is much low-keyed but pungent talk between Stevens and Ratliff, the two moral consciences of Jefferson, and we even see them in New York in a sketchy but hilarious scene.

It is Linda who brings them to New York. Partly under the tutelage of Stevens she has acquired political views, although they are very different from his. The time is 1936 and she is about to marry the Jewish sculptor she has been living with for several years. They have become Communists and are off to the Spanish Civil War, in which Linda's husband is killed and she is made permanently deaf. The deafness is one of the barriers that isolates her from the world after she returns to a lonely celibate life in the mansion owned by the man the town agrees to call her father. Faulkner has never been notable for his women characters, succumbing like so many romancers from Cooper to Hemingway to a folklore about women rather than relying on his own observation of what they are really like. But one of the strong points of *The Town* was the portrait of Eula Varner; in *The Hamlet* she was not much more than a ribald joke enjoyed by the menfolks, but in *The Town* she came to life—a crossroads fabulous Helen whom Faulkner finally showed to be human and even something of a tragic heroine. He has done well, in the novelistic way, with Linda too, and there is much substance as well as pathos in her long, sad story. The moral strands of the book come together when it is shown at the end how Linda in effect collaborated with Mink in the series of events that lead up to the murder of Flem. The ultimate destructiveness of Snopesism is made clear by the fact that Flem himself collaborates or at least acquiesces in his own death.

This is as close to explicit moral comment as Faulkner comes. And those conservative critics who used to maintain that in Faulkner's works there is a system of moral and religious values based on a polarity between the virtues of the old-line aristocrats like the Sartorises and the De Spains and the vices of the Snopeses will be disconcerted anew by the words of Gavin Stevens and Ratliff as they drive through the countryside to give Mink Snopes some money after he has committed the murder:

" 'So maybe there's even a moral in it somewhere, if you jest knowed where to look.'

" 'There aren't any morals,' Stevens said. 'People just do the best they can.'

" 'The pore sons of bitches,' Ratliff said.

" 'The poor sons of bitches,' Stevens said. 'Drive on. Pick it up.' "

This has its full quota of bathos, and in general there is a good deal of emotionalism and sometimes of sentimentality in *The Mansion*. Faulkner returns briefly to characters who have had little or nothing to do with the Snopes saga but about whom one read in books like *The Sound and the Fury*. Jason Compson, his brother Benjy, young Bayard Sartoris, and others unexpectedly appear, like forgotten ghosts, as if the author were reluctant to have done with them.

The pervasive feeling of elegy and sentiment in *The Mansion* has its positive side and finally assists Faulkner in asserting the serious meaning he obviously means to assert. Perhaps, as Gavin Stevens says, there are no "morals" in the world, but there are moral values which we sense intuitively or emotionally and to which we cling even though we can't account for them intellectually. The values asserted in *The Mansion* are the same ones that the author has always asserted when he is writing at his best: love, endurance, tolerance, humor. He has shown a weakness of late years for proclaiming portentous moral abstractions, as in his much-quoted Nobel prize speech. The Faulkner of the Nobel prize speech was the valedictory-rhetorical Faulkner. The author of *The Mansion* is more than a bit valedictory, but in a poetic mood.

Book Reviewers in This Issue

Steven Marcus, a young writer and critic, teaches English at Columbia University.

Irving Kristol, formerly Editor of the *Reporter*, is now at work on a study of the history and character of American intellectuals.

Murray Kempton's column appears regularly in the New York *Post*.

Robert Graves has recently been awarded the Alexander Droutzkoy prize by the Poetry Society of America.

Mati Meged, a young Israeli novelist, is also a student of Jewish mysticism.

George Lichtheim has just completed a book on Marxism, to be published by Doubleday.

Richard Chase is the author of *The American Novel and Its Tradition*.

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The Issue [*continued from page (a)*]

fore. Given the energy and the skill with which he exercised this impulse to teach and guide and influence, virtually no article ever appeared in COMMENTARY without some trace of his hand; and no article ever bore the trace of his hand without being deepened or heightened or refined.

COMMENTARY reflected the personality of Elliot Cohen in many other ways too. The remarkable variety of subjects that the magazine covered was not simply the mark of his limitless curiosity; it was—as Lionel Trilling puts it—a direct consequence of his refusal of intellectual "purity," a refusal to define himself by his exclusions and snobberies rather than by his passions and enthusiasms. To be sure, there was an ideological side to this refusal that several critics of COMMENTARY found repugnant. These critics maintained that the widespread disillusionment with socialism among intellectuals had not, after all, changed the fact that American society was in its nature antagonistic to the values of a truly humane civilization, and they charged—unjustly, I think—that the more "positive" relation to the culture implied by Elliot Cohen's stance was a species of "conformity." But the ideological issue mattered far less to the kind of magazine COMMENTARY was than its critics (and perhaps even its Editor) may have realized. What did matter was the exhilaration, the tone of high seriousness, and the good writing that followed upon Elliot Cohen's eagerness to encourage the application of intelligence, sensibility, and style to subjects that had rarely felt the touch of these qualities before. I am thinking particularly here of the many brilliant pieces he published on American popular culture—pieces in which a group of gifted young writers made a first attempt to take their own involvement in popular culture seriously enough to generate a wealth of new insight into the question of taste and discrimination. Then there was the "Study of Man" department, which gave voice to the efforts of those few social scientists who were actively resisting the barbarization of their disciplines by jargon and naive scientism. So too with the political essays regularly published in the magazine; they exhibited a unique combination of hard-headedness, moral fervor, and good prose. And of course there was the continuing and many-sided analysis of the deep changes taking place in the American Jewish community as a result of the move to the suburbs and the resurgence of Jewish identification among the indifferent—an analysis no less remarkable for its honesty than for its superiority to apologetics or sectarian bias. That COMMENTARY occasionally went too far in some directions and not far enough in others is a trivial point; the main thing to say is that it went *somewhere,* that it never stopped moving, that it was alive and responsive and alert. Elliot Cohen's achievement consisted not (as some incorrigibly reductive readers thought) in the propagation of a new system of attitudes, but in the creation of a magazine daring in conception and responsible in execution; a magazine that found a way of being both Jewish and non-parochial; that could at once satisfy the requirements of the specialist and the needs of the literate reading public; that took its stand against the decay of standards without falling victim to academicism, preciosity, or the spirit of coterie.

SUCH a magazine cannot be described simply in terms of the period in which it flourished, for it is a product of the will, the imagination, and the labor of individuals in what is perhaps the one genuinely collaborative enterprise that also deserves to be called creative. Nevertheless, it goes without saying that a magazine has the most intimate connections with the present and the immediate and the occasional; and a *serious* magazine may be recognized by this: that it knows itself to be located in history and therefore continually tries to deal with the present from the perspective both of the past (which fosters soundness) and of the future (which invites risk). Bearing these qualifications in mind, we can say that COMMENTARY was very much a magazine of the 50's. For one thing, it partook, and to some extent led, in the discovery of a new "general" public which proved receptive to stronger intellectual fare than its predecessors of the 20's and 30's—roughly the same public which, a little mysteriously, has formed the audience for the quality paperbacks and has forced several popular magazines to undergo a radical change of character.

There is, however, a profounder sense in which COMMENTARY was of the 50's. Throughout the 20's and 30's, the belief became common among intellectuals both in America and Europe that the Protestant-liberal-bourgeois synthesis which had formed the basis of Western civilization since the early 17th century was disintegrating at a very rapid rate. The inspiration for this belief came not only from Marxism

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but from a host of social critics on the right (like Ortega and Eliot), as well as from most of the poets and novelists of the modern movement—not to mention observation of life itself. "Things fall apart," said W. B. Yeats in accents reminiscent of John Donne's "An Anatomy of the World," an anguished poem written by a man of the 17th century to whom the break-up of the medieval synthesis seemed equivalent to the destruction of the whole order or the cosmos —and Yeats goes on:

Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world, ...
The best lack all conviction, while the worst
Are full of passionate intensity.

Thinking of Copernicus, Donne said in 1611 that the "new philosophy calls all in doubt," and Yeats in 1919—thinking of Darwin, Freud, Marx, Nietzsche, and Einstein—might easily have said the same, and he would have been echoed by a large proportion of the educated and the literate all over the Western world. It was only in the 50's that the echoes would have grown faint, for it was only in the 50's that this belief began to be challenged with any energy. The causes are much too complex to set forth here, and I will simply say that the diagnosis of the modern prophets was called into doubt when their predictions either failed of fulfillment or were indeed fulfilled, but in shapes unexpectedly horrible. Nietzsche proclaimed the death of Christianity and the consequent birth of a new and more glorious race of creatures on earth; then came the Nazis. Marx asserted that capitalism would perish of its own inner contradictions and that the bourgeoisie would be displaced by a vigorous new class rising on the tide of history. But capitalism did not perish in the depression (whether because of the war or not we shall never know) and the Soviet Union turned out to represent not a new and more humane force struggling into being but an old and monstrous tyranny; not the "wave of the future," but a ghost from the caverns of our own barbarous past—a Christian heresy, as Toynbee called Communism, whose animating drive seemed to be the creation of a culture identical to our own in everything except political freedom and a regard for the sanctity of human life. (The recent Soviet exhibition in New York proudly featured an automobile styled along the lines of the Cadillac, but it went the Cadillac—and America—one better by having a gold-colored grille instead of a silver.)

Under these circumstances a revulsion set in against the idea that the West was "finished," and indeed against the historicist philosophies of the 19th century in general, which had supplied the metaphysical basis for thinking of civilizations as organisms with a pseudo-biological lifespan. This revulsion expressed itself very strongly among the younger philosophers, historians, and sociologists of the postwar period, many of whom found COMMENTARY hospitable to the kinder conception they were developing of the traditions, character, and role of the American middle class. The 50's, in short, undertook to demonstrate that the Protestant-liberal-bourgeois synthesis had *not* broken down—that, in fact, our civilization was proving itself capable of adapting to new circumstances without losing form or identity. In this undertaking, COMMENTARY was an important participant.

BUT in the past few years, the suspicion has begun to force itself into the minds of more and more people that the prosperity of the Eisenhower Age is a deceptive sign of vigor and health. It is not merely a question of our inability to keep up with the Russians in the arms race—though this certainly shows lack of resolution even among those groups who might be expected to believe that a hydrogen war is preferable to a world dominated by the Communists. The boredom one senses on all sides, the torpor, the anxiety, the listlessness, somehow seem a deeper cause for alarm. What is there about the life we lead and the conditions surrounding us that accounts for the rise in the consumption of narcotics (including legal drugs like tranquilizers and sleeping pills); the fantastic divorce rate; the phenomenal number of breakdowns; and the spread of senseless juvenile violence and crime even into the comfortable middle class?

In the current issue we are publishing the first of three essays by Paul Goodman on what it is like to grow up in America today. These essays are important because taken together they constitute the first analysis that solidly relates delinquency to the prevailing patterns of respectability, showing how the juvenile criminal and the Organization Man, the rebel and the conformist, are equally symptomatic of the same deep disturbance in American culture. In defining the nature of the disturbance (if I may anticipate the conclusion to his series), Mr. Goodman develops a fresh and very valuable notion that seems to me a way of honestly rec-

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ognizing the truth about our society without forcing a return to the defeatist idea that the West is finished. Most of our trouble, he says, stems from the fact that we are the inheritors of a number of "incomplete revolutions" (he specifies more than twenty) which have succeeded far enough to disrupt the traditional mores and yet not far enough to replace them with a coherent new pattern. "Some revolutions fail to occur; most half-occur or are compromised, attaining some of their objectives and resulting in significant social changes, but giving up on others, resulting in ambiguous values in the social whole that would not occur if the change had been more thoroughgoing." For example, although industrial workers have won the struggle for unions, better wages, and decent conditions, their failure to push forward to the goal of "production for use" (a key term in syndicalist and socialist thought alike) has meant that the worker continues to be "alienated" from his labor and therefore to be cut off from a prime source of dignity and pride. The economy, moreover, scorning the ideal of use, has dedicated itself to the production of frippery, and this in turn has bred a huge class of promoters and salesmen whose job is to stimulate artificial needs in a consumer already badgered beyond endurance, and whose advertising methods have contributed immeasurably to the debasement of language and the wild growth of a general public cynicism. To take another example of the same condition in the area of morals, there is the widely publicized "sexual revolution," which everyone says has been in progress for the past thirty or forty years. According to Mr. Goodman—and here, whatever one's point of view, it is impossible to disagree—the fact that repression and inhibition have been relaxed without the correlative destruction of "inherited prejudices, fears, and jealousies" has meant that the young (and not they alone) "are trapped by inconsistent rules, suffer because of excessive stimulation and inadequate discharge, and become preoccupied with sexual thoughts as if these were the whole of life."

Mr. Goodman's analysis is the best single description I have seen of the social situation today, and the more one reflects on it, the more widely applicable it comes to appear. As a perspective on what has happened to American youth in the postwar period, it seems to me richer than any of the standard sociological approaches and more concrete than the usual psychoanalytic view. But I think it throws light even on an apparently unrelated phenomenon like the weakness of American foreign policy, which can be interpreted as a symptom of confusion about the historical role of our civilization analogous to the bewilderment of the young over the official values of *their* world. We are the heirs of a tradition (going back to the philosophers of the Enlightenment) which commits us, whether we like it or not, to acting out the great adventure of modernity to the limit. But the pressures of the cold war have gradually transformed us into a society devoting all its energies to holding a defensive line not only against the very real threat of Soviet power but against the promise of our own future potentialities. To work toward the realization of those potentialities would involve a struggle to complete some of the incomplete revolutions of which Mr. Goodman speaks. And since what the newspapers call "imaginative leadership" is simply the blessing heaven bestows on a people willing to pursue the destiny to which their history compels them as though it were a personal psychic need of every individual member, such a struggle might also mean the discovery of alternatives to our present policy of depending exclusively on the "balance of terror" to ward off a hydrogen war. In any event, a good way to begin the work of completion is to encourage a reawakening of the kind of social criticism exemplified by Mr. Goodman's essays—criticism animated by a "utopian" vision of human possibility that commands assent precisely because it is so much more *sensible* than the constricted ideas of people who are pleased to think of themselves as realists. And a good way for COMMENTARY to begin a new period of its own history is for it to participate in an effort of will and consciousness that may, if we are lucky, preoccupy the best minds and talents of the coming decade.

—NORMAN PODHORETZ

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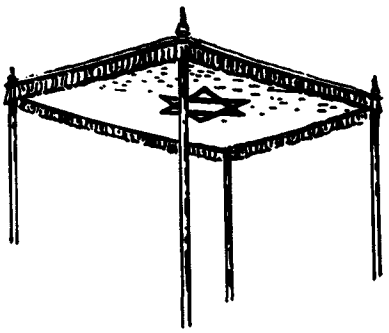

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